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***From Civilising Mission to Civilian Power:
Rethinking EU Peacebuilding from a
Postcolonial Perspective***

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CIAT	Comité international d'accompagnement de la transition
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COAFR	Council Working Group on Africa
COHOM	Council Working Group on Human Rights
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DGVIII	EEC Commission's Directorate-General for Overseas Countries
DHA	Discourse-Historical Approach
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EC	European Community
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDF	European Development Fund
EEC	European Economic Community
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy

EUFOR DR Congo	European Union Military Operation in the DRC
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
EUPOL Kinshasa	EU Police Mission in Kinshasa
EUSEC RD Congo	European Union Mission to Provide Advice and Assistance for Security Sector Reform in the DRC
HEH	House of European History
HQ	Headquarters
ICSP	Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IR	International Relations
JEAS	Joint Africa EU Strategy
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCTs	Overseas Countries and Territories
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCNA	Post-Conflict Needs Assessments
PSOs	Support to Peace Operations
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RPBA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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I dedicate this thesis to Diego, who was born at the start of my doctoral path, and to Anita, who is turning two the day of my thesis submission. Both of them teach me so much more than I can learn in books.

Declaration

I confirm that the submitted work contains neither material from any prior theses nor any material that has already been published.

The thesis is my own work submitted (through the Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate in “Globalisation, Europe, and Multilateralism”) for the degrees of PhD in Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick and PhD in Political and Social Sciences at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

I have not submitted this thesis for consideration elsewhere.

Abstract

This research explores the reverberations of the colonial experience in the European Union (EU) peacebuilding policymaking towards the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In particular, it aims to reconstruct the linkages between the European colonial past and modern-day European Union, in order to assess to what extent such historical heritage is manifested in the discursive practices of EU policymaking on peacebuilding towards the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Thus, the thesis seeks to answer the following research question: *How can postcolonial and decolonial theory help us understand the dominant discourses and politics that frame the EU construction of peacebuilding practice in DRC?*

To do so, the research positions itself in a critical conversation with EU Studies and Postcolonial Studies, and mobilises a Discourse-Historical Approach influenced by Colonial Discourse Theory as a methodological tool.

After having gathered interviews with EU Officials working on peacebuilding policies; having conducted archival research in the Historical Archives of the European Union; and having undertaken participant-observation at the European External Action Service, the results of this research are mainly twofold:

Firstly, this study shows that within EU peacebuilding, the European colonial legacy is hardly addressed by policy-makers; however, the EU relies on a dehistoricised regime where selective historical events are mobilised towards the objective of legitimising EU peacebuilding actions.

Secondly, the research identifies discursive strategies that reproduce colonial discourses in EU peacebuilding policymaking. These strategies, mainly based on racial stereotypes, connote an unchanging order based on a fixed donor/recipient binary. Such pervasive discourses tend to perpetuate dependency, instead of reaffirming an independent peace process that is supposed to be the end goal of EU peacebuilding policies.

Introduction

1. The Puzzle

This thesis examines the colonial legacies present in the European Union (EU) peacebuilding system by analysing continuities and discontinuities of colonial discourse within the EU policymaking on peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The research reconstructs the link between the EU and the European colonial past in order to determine the extent to which such historical heritage is manifested in the discursive construction of EU peacebuilding policies.

In practical terms, this study investigates the ways in which the EU's peacebuilding policy discourse is shaped by a framework that reproduces a "colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2007; 2011). This study unpacks this by analysing the speeches, actions, and texts of EU representatives and individual civil servants in the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) working on EU peacebuilding policymaking towards the DRC.

The interest in pursuing the above-mentioned investigation was triggered by dissatisfaction with the current literature on EU Studies and EU Peacebuilding Studies, which so far appear to not have taken into sufficient consideration the relevance of European colonial history in the formation of the EU and the repercussions that this phenomenon has had on the EU role as peacebuilder towards countries that were former colonies of EU member states. On the contrary, EU Studies tends to produce a narrative of the EU as though created by a "virgin birth" (Nicolaïdis, 2002; 2015) in a historically neutral space (Deloye, 2006).

This has led some scholars to talk about a "loud silence" (Barrinha, 2008) or "colonial amnesia" (Shilliam, 2017), a silence and amnesia largely reflected in the literature on EU peacebuilding (see for example, Hughes, 2013; Olsen, 2009; Richmond, Björkdahl, & Kappler, 2011; Tocci, 2007).

As the political representative body of Europe, the EU is deeply rooted in European history; and it is by virtue of the way European history unfolded that the EU took shape and has acquired its current political and economic weight. Familiarity with the earliest roots of 'Europe' is therefore important if we are to understand European integration as well as its relationship with the rest of the world.

For instance, without knowledge of the two World Wars it would be difficult to explain the quest for an economic alliance after 1945; without recognising the origins of the Balkan Wars, we would have an incomplete understanding of the irregular process of EU enlargement to the East; more recently, we ought not to forget the singularities of Britain's history (e.g., its imperial legacy and perceived position as a transatlantic country) if we are to comprehend some of the drivers of Brexit.

Using this a foundation, the main argument of the thesis is that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC, it is necessary to be grounded in and have a profound consciousness of the history that linked Europe to the Congo. From this *longue durée* perspective, the modern relationship between the EU and the DRC is merely an on-going chapter in an enormous book.

Such a book, the pages of which would span from the 15th century up to the present day, would mainly be filled with stories of political violence, slavery, inequality, the eradication of culture and values, and the partition of the country according to foreign greed and continuous transfer of material resources. In other words: colonialism.

Focusing only on the latest chapter of this long history would mean overlooking important historical features that could contribute towards explaining the current political relationship between the EU and DRC, but would also disregards key realities that may also help to improve the relationship.

This historical omission may create the situation where 'noble gestures' and benevolent overtures — such as helping to promote peace, opening electoral participation, or assisting army reform — may end up counter-productive if interpreted as underpinned by underlying colonial biases.

This thesis is thus firmly rooted in the debate surrounding the EU's identity in the international sphere and its deployment in peacebuilding policies. It unpacks the current literature and demonstrates that the way in which academics have studied these themes so far has been predominantly Eurocentric. Although valuable contributions to the literature, available studies tend to overlook the complex history of the creation of the EU and how this history continues to impact the relationship between the EU and former European colonies, now recipients of EU peacebuilding assistance.

It is for this reason that this thesis locates its theoretical and methodological foundations in postcolonial and decolonial theory. Postcolonial and decolonial theory provide this research with the epistemological tools to unpack to what extent colonial discourses are still embedded in peacebuilding policies and why the EU struggles to free itself from paternalistic discourses towards the DRC. This thesis thus relies on the postcolonial and decolonial theories of international relations that focus on the persistence of colonial forms of power and the continuing existence of colonial legacies in modern day world politics.

However, postcolonial and decolonial scholars have rarely considered the EU's peacebuilding policies as a meaningful unit of analysis. Postcolonial and decolonial scholarship tends to focus on ethnographic accounts of the non-European subaltern experience in order to support in making emerging marginal voices heard; to shed lights on unequal international processes; to silence histories; and to promote the struggle of peoples for economic justice and equality (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Sabaratnam, 2011; Shilliam, 2015 among others). By focusing largely on the 'other', they rarely reflected on the history and the subjectivity from the position of the former colonial power, or 'the master' so to speak, as this research does.

In doing so, this research takes the claim of anticolonial and postcolonial theorists (Cesaire, 1972; Fanon, 1991 [1961]) seriously, examining how the culture of the colonisers have been shaped through colonial encounters, and how colonisation impacted metropolitan countries as significantly as colonised countries.

Indeed, this thesis can be considered postcolonial and decolonial to the extent that it focuses on finding colonial continuities and 'coloniality' within the master subjectivity, rather than finding counter-narratives and resistance to the dominant

accounts. Therefore, the disciplinary site for this investigation is the intersection between the EU Studies, Peacebuilding Studies, and Postcolonial Studies, and locates itself in the literature by addressing these gaps.

The selected methodological position of this thesis reflects this unique interdisciplinary situation. It was necessary to select a methodology which is both sensitive to historical processes, but at the same time applicable to the analysis of present EU peacebuilding compounds. These two stipulations are satisfied by the selection of discourse analysis.

Indeed, discourse analysis is a tool used in a plurality of disciplines and here is particularly applicable to understanding if and to what extent there are legacies of a colonial mindset in the discourses and practices of EU practitioners dealing with DRC's peacebuilding policies. More precisely, the methodology used in this thesis can be considered as Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) influenced by Colonial Discourse Theory. Indeed, if the former can be helpful to link discursive practice to historical contexts, the latter can more incisively pinpoint the way in which narratives tend to reproduce colonial discourses.

By applying a postcolonial perspective and utilising discourse analysis supported by colonial discourse theory, the thesis intends to answer the following central question:

How can postcolonial and decolonial theory help us understand the dominant discourses and politics that frame the EU construction of peacebuilding practice in DRC?

The above core research question has been unpacked and developed into the following sub-questions, both conceptually and empirically:

- *To what extent do EU peacebuilding practitioners reproduce colonial knowledge related to DRC?*
- *What are the consequences of the presence of a 'colonial legacy' for the construction of peacebuilding practices?*

This thesis' foundation is grounded on three key pillars: the EU's colonial subjectivity; the historicity of peacebuilding; and colonial discourse.

In order to answer the research questions and to examine colonial reverberations within the EU peacebuilding system, the thesis provides three important ‘reconstructions’, each associated with one of the three pillars. Reconstructions, in the postcolonial context, are a reflective attempt to deconstruct dominant accounts and rebuild different articulations of political rationality or theoretical categories in order to open different perspectives. Reconstructions allow us to think differently about forms of understanding — concepts, categories, and methods — and to use this reflection to incorporate new data and evidence (see Bhambra, 2007).

Therefore, these reconstructions are an epistemological intervention that provides a historical, theoretical, and methodological platform that allows us to empirically scrutinise the presence of colonial legacies in EU peacebuilding discourses towards DRC.

These three reconstructions are: (a) the reconstruction of EU’s colonial subjectivity by reconnecting the EU with European colonial history (chapters one and three); (b) the reconstruction of colonial continuities and discontinuities in the discourse of ‘bringing peace to Africa’ from its advent in the colonial period to the recent creation of EU peacebuilding policies (chapters four and five); and, (c) the reconstruction of the meaning of colonial discourse by a methodological intervention which connects colonial discourse theory with current manifestations of colonial discourse in contemporary politics (chapter two).

Although presented in separate chapters, these three reconstructions are not limited to them. On the contrary, they crisscross through the thesis as key interpretative concepts. These reconstructions allow for the framing of the EU’s colonial legacy; peacebuilding and colonial discourse in a postcolonial framework; and to best ground the empirical research.

2. First Reconstruction: The EU’s Colonial History

When presenting my research in conferences or seminars, I quite often receive comments from the audience that my inquiry was not about EU Studies, but that I was just using the EU as a case study for my postcolonial analysis. At first glance, such

comments triggered a certain discomfort and uncertainty within me. However, upon reflection, I came to understand that they were, in fact, just reinforcing my argument: the omission of colonial memory within the European Studies discipline is so profound that it has led to the incapability of even considering such a topic as a pertinent object of analysis within EU Studies. Thus, the research of colonial legacy in EU peacebuilding needs to be framed in a broader consideration of the historical trajectory which connects colonialism to the EU.

In doing so, the research considers first why and how the creation of such a ‘colonial amnesia’ has made this possible, pointing out that the reasons might be linked to the specificity of EU Studies as a disciplinary field (to be discussed further in chapter one) as well to the process of EU’s memory formation (to be discussed further in chapter three).

Building on the acknowledgement of this amnesia, the thesis’ endeavour is to reconstruct the impact which the colonial phenomenon had and continues to have on the EU.

This reconstruction answers a series of crucial interrogations which set the basis for the research: can colonialism be considered an EU matter or is it exclusively a concern for the former colonial powers individually? How can we claim that colonialism was a European phenomenon — and consequently an EU concern — when only some of the European states, even if the majority, had colonies?

By answering these questions, the research draws upon the limited yet insightful studies on European colonialism which tends to challenge the conception that discussions concerning the EU should only be forward-looking and to embrace the colonial story in the domain of EU Studies (see for example Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; Nicolaïdis, K. & Sèbe, 2014; Pasture, 2015).

The research thus reveals that the European subjectivity was profoundly influenced by the relationship of domination imposed by European colonial powers, and both the colonial and the decolonising moment crucially determined the contours of the EU as we know it. The thesis points to the conclusion that the privileged position the EU occupies in the international sphere is, in part, parasitically-derived as an conglomerate of countries that had previously pillaged large portions of the world.

What is more, this reconstruction opens the door to the notion that the very birth of the EU was deeply entangled with colonial aspirations.

By showing salient moments of EU integration, the research demonstrates that the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC) did not take place in opposition to the colonial aspirations of the member states. On the contrary, European integration happens with the intention of keeping and “recycling” the imperial structure of domination, even after decolonisation.

3. Second Reconstruction: The Roots of Peacebuilding in Africa

The second reconstruction looks at the other central concept of the thesis: peacebuilding. The choice of focusing on peacebuilding practices relies on the profound interest in looking at how ‘peace has always been at the core of the European interest – internally and externally.

Peace, indeed, is central to the ‘myth’ of the creation of the EU. Indeed, the official historiography of the EU allocates a crucial role to the notion of “peace” (Ifversen, 2010), as it is commonly said that the EU has been historically conceived as a peace project with the aim of ending the division produced from two World Wars (see Tocci, 2008 and 2011; Björkdahl, Richmond and Kappler, 2009; Natorsky, 2011).

Similarly, in 2012, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU because of its role at helping to transform “most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace” (Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2012). This indicates that the EU’s *raison d’être* is to be a peace project ending centuries of warfare in Europe and that peace has fundamentally shaped its external mission. Yet, the internal dimension of peace was historically mirrored in an external dimension of bringing peace outside of European borders. Before and after the ‘peaceful integration’, Europe has acted as a peace ambassador externally.

Despite the fact that peacebuilding is frequently seen as a relatively new set of instruments that allows the EU to engage in conflict-prone countries, it is the intention in this inquiry to show that the moral discourse of bringing peace is not new and it can be tied to European colonial aspirations of effectuating peace abroad.

It is with these dimensions that the thesis aims at reconstructing the historicity of the concept of “bringing peace to Africa” by looking at the continuities and discontinuities from the European colonial discourse of effectuating peace abroad to the current peacebuilding missions. In this milieu, the EU discourse in bringing peace to Africa is mobilised as the central example. This reconstruction shows the continuity and discontinuities and makes visible the discursive conditions that allowed the creation of contemporary EU peacebuilding policies

4. Third Reconstruction: a Methodology for the Study of Colonial Discourse

The third reconstruction is focused on another fundamental concept of the research: colonial discourse. Despite the plethora of studies on colonial discourses (see Bhabha, 1984 and 1994; Mohanty, 1988; Said, 1978; Smith, 2012 [1999]; Chrisman & Williams, 2015; Parry, 1987; Vidal, 1993 among others) this research has identified a gap, specifically in the methodologies deployed to analyse them.

Indeed, it is very difficult to find specific methodological tools in postcolonial and decolonial literature that can answer questions such as: how to analyse colonial discourses? How to make a claim that a discourse is colonial? How to compare colonial discourses over time? How to operationalise a diachronic and synchronic comparison of colonial discourses?

In other words, I realised the need to devise a methodology that would explore possible connections between the older, cruder version of colonial discourse during colonial times on the one hand and the current manifestation of such legacies on the other.

In order to find an answer to this methodological question, the thesis seeks to address the gap that is present between the vast literature around colonial discourse theory and its practical application. In doing so, the thesis aims at making a methodological contribution by way of bridging the theoretical analysis of colonial discourses (Colonial Discourse Theory) with discourse analysis, privileging the Discourse-Historical Approach part of the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology.

This operationalisation allows for the reconstruction of colonial discourse as an interpretative concept that can be used in the analysis of current manifestation of post-imperial Eurocentrism, and the underlying colonial mindset it entails.

It should be acknowledged that delivering such methodological reconstruction proved to be quite a challenging task. First, the combination of the Discourse-Historical Approach with the field of Colonial Discourse Theory made this operation quite challenging, due to the novelty of the approach and to the limited number of scholars to draw on.

What is more, the specific operationalisation of colonial discourse was rendered much more challenging by the sensitivity of the subject under analysis. Digging into the colonial legacy and trying to dismantle the Eurocentric underpinnings of the EU is quite an uncomfortable position for a researcher. In this process, I was often confronted with reluctance from interviewees and with a certain degree of hostility in a certain academic environment. These challenges will be explained more in details in the thesis.

Sabaratnam (2013: 274), referring to her work as anticolonial scholars in IR devoted to challenging Eurocentrism, explains:

This is certainly not the easiest place for scholars to start with methodologically, either in terms of the practicalities of conducting substantive empirical research or in terms of the personal and psychological disorientation that this kind of research may involve. Moreover, one may never be able to fully erase the sedimentations of Eurocentric knowledge, which in some ways goes to the very heart of the practice of professional scholarship.

5. Methods, Data, and Case Study

One of the main principles of DHA is that of triangulation, which enables researchers to minimise ‘cherry-picking’ due to its endeavour to work on the basis of a variety of different data, methods, and background information (Wodak, 2001: 65; Wodak and Boukala, 2014: 178). As such, the ‘triangulatory’ approach of the thesis is based on a wide range of sources: interviews, archival research, participant observation, and document analysis.

The empirical basis of this thesis is grounded on 62 interviews conducted from April to December 2015 and from March to August 2016 conducted with EU officials working on peacebuilding policies. Moreover, the interviews have been complemented by six months of participant observation at the Central African Division of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Substantial archival research has been done in the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and other relevant archives. The historical analysis has allowed for the juxtaposition of the qualitative data obtained by interviews and participant observation with historical knowledge. Finally, the research benefitted from the analysis of EU’s official documents, and from exploratory interviews with members of civil society organisations.

As remarked, the significance of the notion of ‘peace’ for the internal and external history of the EU is one of the main reasons that led me to select the policies of EU peacebuilding as a case study. Indeed, it is extremely interesting to unpack whether this historical emphasis on building internal and external peace had an impact on the peacebuilding policies in the contemporary context.

Furthermore, the specific unit of analysis is the construction of peacebuilding practices in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The DRC has been selected as a relevant case study for two main reasons: first, due to the long history of colonisation and barbaric exploitation that lead some scholars to frame it as genocide (see Hochschild, 1998); and, second, the DRC is extremely relevant for this study because it has been defined as “the largest laboratory for EU crisis management” (Grevi, 2007:114), where the EU has somehow “tested” all its peacebuilding instruments. Indeed, five missions have been deployed since the birth of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), along with the employment of peace mediation efforts (dialogue conferences, funds

for reconciliations), funds from the European Development Fund, the Instrument for Stability, the European Peacebuilding Partnership, humanitarian assistance instruments. Although the analysis of the discursive practices is focused on this specific area for methodological reasons, the theory chosen and the specific analytical methodology can be duplicated towards different aspects of the EU actions. Therefore, it is hoped that the concerns and preoccupations, and avenues of research and reconstruction presented here may resonate with a broader reading public.

6. Original Contributions

Each of the three reconstructions provides an original contribution to the academic and political debates as they bring forward a new understanding of three concepts: (a) a reconstruction of the EU's colonial subjectivity which provides an understanding of the EU's colonial underpinnings; (b) a reconstruction of continuity and discontinuity in the discourse of bringing peace which provides a conceptualisation of the *longue durée* of the peacebuilding's moral bases; (c) the reconstruction of a methodology of analysis for colonial discourse which allows for the comprehension of present-day manifestations of colonial discourse in contemporary politics.

Moreover, these three reconstructions provide a solid historical, theoretical, and methodological platform that creates an avenue to empirically scrutinise the presence of colonial legacies in EU peacebuilding discourses towards the DRC. Within this overall analytical framework, it has been possible to deconstruct the documents, the actions and the speeches of EU practitioners about the construction of peacebuilding policies in the DRC. This empirical effort allows for the demonstration of the existence of a colonial legacy in peacebuilding policymaking. Notably, the thesis illustrates that colonial discourse in EU peacebuilding is sustained by two main interlinked discursive strands: the first, concerning the colonial erasure in EU peacebuilding in the DRC, and the second, admitting a positive legacy of colonialism in contemporary peacebuilding in the DRC, focusing on the relevance of former colonisers as experts.

The coexistence of these two discursive strands and their ambivalence indicate the presence of a colonial rationale that is based on a dehistoricised regime: only partial

historical events are mobilised to justify the EU's peacebuilding actions and to legitimise its interventions.

Moreover, the thesis demonstrates that the absence of a critical rethinking of European colonial history, which has led to a general reproduction of colonial discourse underpinning EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC.

The analysis of discourses on peacebuilding in the DRC proves that such colonial epistemology is supported by a series of discursive strategies. The discursive strategies encountered reinforce stereotypes and maintain a colonial order of discourse.

This order of discourse is structured in the traditional dichotomist relations that conjure up such notions as centre vs. margin, peaceful vs. violent, master/knowledgeable vs. infant/recipient. These dichotomies continue to fix representational regimes according to which "northern/EU" is cast hierarchically above "southern/DRC" spaces and identities.

Finally, the research illustrates that the colonial order of discourse is maintained, and this is built on a regime of truth in which the EU's power is naturalised and its moral justification is pervasive. This does not leave much margin to autonomous ownership and appropriation of the peace process by the recipients, which is supposed to be the final goal of peacebuilding practices.

7. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with an analysis of the debate around colonialism within EU and Peacebuilding Studies. Despite the importance of connecting the EU's colonial past with the construction of its identity and memory, EU Studies literature largely overlooks many significant segments of history. In fact, a major part of EU Studies literature seems rooted in a Eurocentric perspective: a clear example of this being the production of a plethora of studies that wants to define the EU's international power as a unique value-driven force.

Therefore, the **first chapter** analyses the literature on EU Studies. The chapter shows the contradiction of denying the EU's colonial legacies while at the same time

preserving its Eurocentric discourses in academia. Furthermore, this chapter opens the door to academic publications that have began to reflect on the significance of colonialism in EU external relations, moving away from obsolete Eurocentric accounts. The chapter also engages with the literature on EU peacebuilding and highlights critical voices that have challenged the normative value-driven connotations in EU peacebuilding policies.

The **second chapter** substantiates the argument of the importance of borrowing insights from postcolonial scholars and decolonial scholars to understand the intrinsic presence of colonial structures in the international system. Central to the argument in this thesis is the concept of colonial discourse and how it can be grasped through a poststructuralist perspective. This is followed by a discussion of how postcolonial insights can be operationalised in a research methodology, building and conceptualising a Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) influenced by Colonial Discourse Theory. Finally, the main sources used in the investigation to gather data are explained.

What follows is a historical overview that builds the foundation of the overall thesis argument. Drawing upon scholarship on European history (Kiernan, 1980; Sierp, 2014; Pasture, 2015 among others), the **third chapter** reflects on the significance of conceiving the colonial past not only as a matter of concern for individual former colonial powers but as a collective European issue. Furthermore, claims are made that we should consider colonialism as part not only of European history but also of the EU collective memory.

In doing so, the research provides a historical detour focused on colonialism framed as a European phenomenon and how it is also fundamentally linked with the birth of the European Union. Despite the tendency in EU Studies and EU policy-making not to reflect on their colonial underpinnings, this chapter presents how the opening of the House of European History by the European Parliament shed new light on the conceptualisation of colonialism as part of the EU memory.

The **fourth chapter** provides a more specific focus on EU-Africa “peace” relations. Relying on archival documents, interviews, and on a multiplicity of EU documents, the chapter gives a historical overview of the EU-Africa relations based on the “peace-

imperative”. It explains that norms regarding Europe’s essential task and ethical responsibility to facilitate Africa’s peace have long been embedded in the relationship with Africa; and demonstrates how the discourse of bringing peace to Africa evolved over the course of history. It considers how the discourse changed gradually as an effect of European Integration and decolonisation and how after the end of the Cold War the notion of bringing peace to Africa returned to the fore.

The analysis provides context for the **fifth chapter** which focuses on EU peacebuilding policies in DRC. It discusses the conceptualisation of the notion of international peacebuilding before outlining the peculiarity of the EU peacebuilding framework. The chapter then moves on to the analysis of EU peacebuilding in the DRC, providing an explanation of what have historically been the EU peace policies in the DRC from decolonisation. The empirical basis of the chapter is constituted by documents found in the HAEU. Furthermore, the chapter illustrates the peacebuilding instruments deployed in the DRC in order to provide a framework of reference for the last two empirical chapters that deal specifically with the case study.

The sixth chapter unpacks the main discourses around colonial legacy in EU peacebuilding policies in the DRC. This chapter analyses the results of 62 interviews conducted with EU Officials working on peacebuilding policies in DRC in order to understand the extent of colonial legacies in this sphere. It looks at ways in which discourse influences the EU’s colonial past in the context of its peacebuilding activities in the DRC from the standpoints of the EU’s institutional representatives and individual civil servants in the Commission and the European External Action Service. Using the Discourse-Historical Approach, this chapter charts the emergence of the dominant discursive strands found in the interviews, in order to analyse to what extent they tend to reproduce the colonial discourse. The main result of this enquiry is the recognition of two main interlinked discursive strands: one concerning the total irrelevance of colonial history for EU peacebuilding in DRC, and the other admitting a positive legacy of colonialism in contemporary EU peacebuilding in the DRC. Such discursive strands, apparently contradictory, confirm the presence of colonial discourse as composed of ambivalent and unstable utterances that nonetheless reproduce and naturalise a “regime of truth” (Foucault, 2003 [1976]) in which

colonialism is silenced but contemporarily reproduced in the promotion of the former coloniser's role.

Building upon the findings of chapter six, finally, the **seventh chapter** claims that the absence of a deep rethinking of the European colonial history and its implications for peacebuilding policies leads to a reproduction of a colonial epistemology and pedagogy in the EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC. Relying on the results of interviews and participant observation in the Central African Division of the EEAS, this claim is substantiated by the analysis of several stereotypes typical of colonial knowledge, that have been noticed in the analysed interviews and in the documents: the idea of Congolese as backward, infantile, lax, violent, and of the DRC as a pre-modern, failed country. Such stereotypes have been considered as embedded in discursive strategies that naturalise a dichotomist relationship between EU and the DRC. Finally, the research shows how such discourses tend to marginalise the local in the resolution of conflict and to exert power through conditional peacebuilding.

In the **conclusion**, the thesis reflects on the main findings of the research and discusses the extent to which the reproduction of colonial discourse in peacebuilding is detrimental to the fulfilment of EU peacebuilding goals. Indeed, such discourses tend to perpetuate dependency instead of reaffirming an independent peace process that is supposed to be the final goal of EU peacebuilding policies. The thesis concludes by providing thoughts on avenues for further research.

Chapter One

A Review of the Literature on the Civilising Legacy in EU Peacebuilding

Introduction

This thesis' core objective of connecting EU peacebuilding policymaking with European colonial history, and in finding legacies of the latter in the former, was triggered by a certain degree of dissatisfaction with current EU Studies literature. In this sense, the research aligns with scholars in the literature who seek to unpack the incapacity of EU Studies to address European colonial legacy. In particular, the thesis owes a great debt to researchers such as Peo Hansen, Veronique Dimier, Kalypso Nicolaïdis, and Patrick Pasture (among others) who first opened the door to a historical rethinking of the EU in its global role.

Despite the attention paid in academia to interpreting what kind of power the EU represents in the international arena, it is impossible not to notice that until a decade ago there has been a silence in discussions regarding the origins of this power.

Indeed, in EU Studies several scholars have already argued that there has been a gap for years in the comprehension of the historicity of EU identity, often giving the impression that the EU has been created as a new entity that had nothing to do with previous experiences of its member states as colonial powers. The omission of the conceptualisation of the colonial past in EU Studies has led some scholars to talk about a “loud silence” (Barrinha, 2008) or a “virgin birth” (Nicolaïdis, 2002; 2015).

Steinmetz contends that the field of EU studies has constituted itself through a series of exclusions and negative boundaries. Hence, for a long time, EU Studies defined

itself against the deeper European past and, at the same time, it tended to define itself rather rigidly as anchored in the social sciences and as excluding the humanities and interdisciplinary approaches more broadly (2003). In this sense, the EU Studies' field has long resisted the contamination of other approaches.

More relevant for this research, we can see EU Studies particularly guarded itself from being an object of postcolonial studies, thus reinforcing a boundary against the rest of the world, and being impermeable to the attempts of colonial studies to transcend the "West versus the rest" model (Ibid., 2003).

While wondering why learned scholars have, for decades, overlooked the historicity of the EU, we should take into account the complex disciplinary history of EU Studies: first of all, it is necessary to take into account the fact that European Integration Studies have only recently established themselves, after a long period of being considered as a subfield of International Relations (IR). In this sense, EU Studies maintained the Eurocentric approach of IR - rooted in the Westphalian system - that has only recently been challenged (see Buzan, B., & Little, R., 2002; Capan, 2017 and Shilliam, 2011 among others).

Secondly, it is worth exploring the close relationship between the field of EU Studies - in terms of theoretical traditions - and the object of study, namely the EU and its changing policies. Rosamond (2007b) considered that the dual relationship between the intellectual evolution of EU Studies and its object of analysis (mainly EU policies) has been understood by scholars in two ways: some saw that the trajectory of EU studies is a function of the changing nature of the EU over time (Ibid.: 25) whereas other scholars interrogated EU studies' potential to act as the intellectual legitimization of particular ideologies associated with the object of study (Ibid.). This, following Rosamond, is similar to Wolfgang Wessels' (2006) discussion of 'pull' factors (from the EU) and 'push' factors (from the discipline) that together act to shape the disciplinary historical turns of the field of EU Studies. Such push and pull factors do not operate independently of one another. This could also be grasped in the more reflexive lens of Giddens' notion of the double hermeneutic: concepts developed in EU scholarly analyses can themselves come to impact on and become constitutive of practices under analysis.

The ‘double hermeneutics’ that links EU studies field and the EU itself, is a useful way into a critical analysis of the exclusion of the colonial phenomenon both from the academic enquiry and from debates on EU foreign policy after integration.

In this sense, the academic theorisations have been bound by certain walls, governed on one side by its object of study (the EU and its practitioner’s views) and on the other by the sociology of knowledge. One of the outputs of this double hermeneutics might be considered the almost total omission from both sides - the EU practitioner side and the academic one - of the colonial memory and the legacy of it in the EU context. Both omissions seem to therefore reinforce themselves and strengthen a certain regime of truth about EU past. Simaliry, Hansen and Jonsson (2017) noted that “historians and political scientists have tended to situate European integration as an intergovernmental and supranational political project both outside of and beyond the history of colonialism” and considered that there is “a near perfect fit between such scholarly accounts and the self-admiring story that the EU itself often tells about its past” (Ibid.: 5). The thesis will consider the EU’s colonial memory in Chapter Three and will continue reflecting on this link between the scholarship traditions and its object of study in the considerations about Member State colonial past.

The lack of reflection on colonial history expands not only to studies about the EU nature but also to studies on EU external relations. Particularity relevant for this research is the fact that the majority of studies conducted on EU peacebuilding also tend to ignore the complex historical roots of the EU. They overlook the power derived from the imperialist past of EU Member States and the consequences that this reproduces in the relation between the EU and EU Member States’ former colonies and peacebuilding recipients. Only in the last few years, postcolonial perspectives have made inroads into EU Studies, and voices have started speaking up regarding the importance of engaging with the imperialistic past in the EU Studies realm (see for example Behr, 2007; Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; Merlingen, 2013; Nicolaïdis, 2013; Pasture, 2015).

The end result is that within academic circles, the investigation of the effects of colonialism in the current external policies of the EU, and in particular in its peacebuilding policies, remains heavily under-addressed.

The objective of this investigation is, therefore, to address this lacuna in the literature by linking EU Studies with Postcolonial Studies. This theoretical bridge would allow for the articulation of a large section of EU discourses and practices in peacebuilding policymaking in order to identify to what extent the EU has addressed its colonial legacies and possible continuities and discontinuities in colonial discourses. In this context, this first chapter explores the main debates around the EU's discursive identity in International Relations and its deployment in peacebuilding policies. Unpacking the existing literature on EU identity and EU peacebuilding, this chapter shows that the way in which academics have studied these themes so far has been mainly Eurocentric.

As such, the chapter is structured around two sections: the first section leads with an examination of the EU's international identity/power debate, focusing on the work of several authors whose mutually-influencing works represent incisive contributions to the formation of the current idea of the EU. Ranging from the concepts of civilian power (Duchêne, 1973; Maull, 1996; Telò, 2006) and normative power (Manners, 2002) to ethical power (Aggestam, 2008), the chapter engages with a number of authors that emphasize the uniqueness of the EU project, and at the same time, its moral superiority.

Subsequently, an important shift in this debate is provided by scholars such as Linklater (2005 and 2011) and Keene (2013) who started correlating the EU as a civilian/normative/ethical power with the notion of 'civilising' power. By stressing the civilising legacy in EU civilian and normative power (Linklater, 2005), these scholars started to promote a historical understanding of EU identity. Being aware of such a historical legacy, other scholars add to this debate the call to provincialise the Eurocentric accounts of EU foreign policy (see Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis, 2013).

The second section of this chapter locates the debate around civil and normative power Europe within the context of EU peacebuilding. To do so, the section provides firstly an overview of the extensive literature about the liberal peacebuilding debate in IR. It engages with theories that put in relation the current 'liberal peacebuilding' approach with the colonial civilizing mission, ranging from scholars who see international peacebuilding as a benign "new imperialist" turn (Ferguson, 2004 and Paris, 2002 among others), to the critical debate that challenges the "liberal peace" as a system of

ideologically driven interventions (Duffield, 2001; Jabri, 2007, Mc Ginty, 2011; Selbi, 2013 among others).

Successively, the chapter engages more specifically with the field of EU Peacebuilding Studies, looking at the way normative/civilian power Europe has been employed in considering the uniqueness of the EU peacebuilding approach.

In the final, concluding section, space is given to those scholars starting to explore the limitations of the EU peacebuilding approach and reconnecting this with the European colonial legacy. By doing so, limitations and exclusions are explored and it is argued that it is possible to identify important gaps in how the debate has unfolded. Indeed, it can be argued that in order to overcome the lacuna of this academic literature there needs to be a bridge between EU Studies and the postcolonial approaches. Thus, this thesis creates space for a new kind of analytical framing of EU identity in peacebuilding.

1. EU uniqueness? The Debate around the Nature of EU External Identity

1.1. The Civilian, Normative, and Ethical Power Europe

During the past twenty years, there has been an almost continuous debate about the nature of the European Union as an international actor. The considerable quantity of literature on this theme denotes a sort of “obsession” with the concept of European identity in academia (Stråth, 2000). In these discussions a large number of scholars - mainly from Liberal International Relations Theory and from the Liberal Realism tradition - tend to theorize the uniqueness of the EU in international politics, underlining the distinctiveness of its values-oriented politics, mainly in the promotion of universal principles abroad (Elgström and Smith, 2006). Despite the fact that in the last couple of years an important shift has been made from a strong normativism to a more pragmatic approach regarding the analysis of the EU’s role in the world, it is noticeable that the civilising aspect is still present.

Over the last three decades, the concept of civilian power has been associated with the EU’s image in international relations. This idea was first promoted in the early seventies by François Duchêne. Duchêne was a key adviser to Jean Monnet and EU scholars himself, which well exemplifies the entanglement between European political agents and academics that have been considered above.

Duchêne described the European Community as an “exemplar of a new stage in political civilization” (1973: 19). According to the author, European civilian power influences the international system by promoting its ideas of democracy, human rights, economic growth and international cooperation:

The European Community must be a force for the international diffusion of civilian and democratic standards” and for the promotion of values that belong to its inner characteristics, such as equality, justice and tolerance and an interest for the poor abroad.

(Duchêne, 1973: 20).

According to Duchêne, thus, “civilian power Europe” marks an important step in the civilisation process as it attempts “to domesticate relations between states, including those of its members and those with states outside its frontiers” (ibid). What this civilising process is and where it comes from, however, is not explained by the author who takes for granted the leading role of the newly integrated Europe in human evolution. After Duchêne, the idea of civilian power has been embraced by several scholars that have emphasized different aspects of this notion.

Mario Telò, for instance, proposes a pragmatic understanding of civilian power, looking primarily at the evolution of the EU as a civilian power since the end of the Second World War, which he identifies as the moment of construction of the “new Europe’s international identity” (Telò, 2006: 1). This understanding of the EU looks at the gradual peaceful coexistence and cooperation between the EU and neighbouring states, guaranteed by a worldview in which order and the spread of democracy and human rights are assured through rules, regimes, multilateral institutions, and values (Ibid.). Similar to Duchêne, Telò acknowledges the importance of the historical roots of the emerging EU civilian attitude, yet he does not dedicate space to the legacy of this historical component in the formation of the EU.

In alignment with Telò, Hans Maull defines a civilian power as a “conception of foreign policy role and behaviour bounded to particular aims, values, principles, as well as forms of influence and instruments of power in the name of a civilisation of international relations” (1996, as quoted in Diaz, 2005). Other authors reinforced the debate on civilian power, some criticizing the ideal-typical features (see Smith, 2005) other considering that the militarising of the Union would allow to better act as a civilian power in the world, considering this as “a force for the external promotion of democratic principles” (Stavridis, 2001: 44).

The presence of a normative commitment in these definitions resembles the concept created some years later by Ian Manners, and it is to this author that the analysis now turns to explore the debate.

In 2000, Ian Manners provided a conceptual shift in this debate, arguing that the label ‘normative power’ would be more appropriate to describe the EU (Manners, 2000 and 2002).

Manners' concept of normative power emphasizes the ideational impact of the EU's international identity, which is able to "shape conceptions of normal" in international relations (Manners, 2002: 239). Manners takes inspiration from the idea of power over opinion developed by Russell and Carr (1946) and from the critical perspective of Johan Galtung about ideological power as a power of ideas (1973) to describe a normative power of an ideational nature characterised by common principles.

Peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are identified as the five core values which are central to the EU's *acquis communautaire* and are argued to be promoted in the EU's internal and external rhetoric, discourses and actions.

The thesis of 'normative power Europe' is that one of the key roles of the EU is to shape the norms by which other states operate and that it does so not just by saying and doing things, but in part simply by being different, by embodying a distinctive set of values that others wish to emulate (see, for instance, Manners and Whitman, 2003). In other words, what is relevant for this discussion, is that Manners himself presented normative power as an ontological, positivist quality of the EU, due to its particular historical evolution that gives a normatively different basis for its relations with the world (Manners, 2002: 252).

The moral ideational underpinnings of the normative power Europe, according to Manners – and other scholars – are rooted in the historical context of the creation of the EU. In other words, the normative power "was created in a post-war historical environment which reviled the nationalisms that had led to barbarous wars and genocide" (Manners, 2002: 240). But, as typical among EU Scholars, Manners also strongly argues against stretching the historical comparison back into Europe's past of imperialism and the *mission civilisatrice* (Keene, 2013: 950). Indeed, he observes that one of the main purposes of his normative power thesis is 'an attempt to escape civilising missions by countering the neocolonial discourses of claims implicit (or explicit) in civilian power' (Manners, 2006: 175).

The moral inclination in the dominant self-image of the EU has been deepened in 2008 when Lisbeth Aggestam contributed to the debate by promoting the concept of ethical

power Europe as a positive model that “proactively works to change the world in the direction of a global common good” (Aggestam, 2008: 1).

As we said, EU academics often endorse the thoughts of EU practitioners, and in this case, Aggestam declares to take inspiration from Robert Cooper¹, diplomat and expert involved in drawing up proposals for the EEAS and the Global Strategy of 2003.

According to Cooper, the European Union should be a “cooperative empire” (2006: 80-84) because of the EU features that best serve the essence of the postmodern system (*ibid.*). Indeed, Cooper classifies the world in three hierarchic spheres (postmodern, modern and pre-modern) and advocates the birth of a new Western postmodern imperialism that is compatible with human rights and cosmopolitan values.

Paraphrasing Robert Cooper’s vision, Aggestam argues that the EU is stepping out of its “postmodern” paradise to bring its message of peace and justice to the “modern” and “premodern” worlds. (*ibid.*: 2). What Aggestam is proposing is a concept inspired by the moral superiority of the EU, able to categorise the world in a hierarchic scale of modernity from its “Kantian paradise” (Kagan, 2003)².

Moreover, Aggestam argues that ethical power is derived from two aspects. First, a cosmopolitan view in which ethical principles can be considered universal natural rights. Second, an image of the EU as a role model and example, drawing on “the specific European experience in achieving peace and reconciliation” (Aggestam, 2008: 7). The author admits that the problem with this ambition to shape the world in

¹ As former Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, he assisted Javier Solana with the implementation of European strategic, security and defence policy and after the Lisbon Treaty he drew up the proposals for the new European External Action Service

² Cooper was indeed claiming that a new form of voluntary imperialism is necessary to supervise and bring order in fragile states (Cooper, 2006). Fittingly, Barbara Delcourt notices that the writings of Cooper seem inspired by liberal philosophers like Stuart Mill who developed an apologetic vision of British colonialism, resting on a conception of the history of mankind as being a civilizational development in four stages: savagery, slavery, barbarism and modern civilization (2007: 185). Needless to say, Cooper’s presentation of the European Union’s superiority and his reference to new forms of colonisation raises numerous concerns regarding the use of civilian power in peacebuilding. As John Ikenberry points out, Cooper’s vision is fraught with unexamined peril (2003). Indeed, his thoughts instantly reminds us of the justification of colonialism. Yet, there is an emergent tension in his renewed imperialism. Indeed, on the one hand Cooper believes that a new era of imperialism should come to order the premodern world, but on the other hand the birth of the CSDP seems to be created in rupture to the historical past, and a new benign European Union is the antithesis of the past imperial era.

Europe's image is that it is based on an assumption that European values and ways of doing things are intrinsically superior and could be perceived as incipient cultural imperialism. However, she does not solve the troubling prospect that arises from this.

Like many other scholars, Aggestam was deeply influenced by the work of Manners, who had a considerable impact on the study of European foreign policy. After his first publication, many other scholars have highlighted the EU's normative, value-driven external policy. As Youngs (2004:415) convincingly shows, after Manners, most analysts have come to "posit a pre-eminence of ideational dynamics as key to the EU's distinctiveness as an international actor".

One of the reasons for the success of this concept might be the fact that it actually endorses –thus legitimises– the external action of the EU. It provides a theorisation of the "goodness" of the EU by reflecting the official vision of the EU as a "force for good".

1.2. The Normative Power in the EU's Global Strategies

The 'double hermeneutics' that links EU academics and their object of study is seen in the ways the theorisation of normative power was inspired by the EU action abroad and, at the same time, permeated and reinforced by such a role. Therefore, speculations about civilian/normative power Europe seemed supporting the belief that the uniqueness of EU legitimises its action in "strengthening the international order" (Council of the European Union, 2003).

By looking at the European Security Strategies *in primis*, as well as documents of the Council of the European Union and speeches of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, we can easily distinguish this entanglement. For example, in 2000, Romano Prodi, former President of the European Commission (1999–2004) said: "We must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable global development. After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security" (European Parliament, 2000: 3); while his successor José Manuel Barroso in 2007 said: "in terms of normative power, I broadly agree: we are one of the most important, if not the most important, normative powers in the world" (DIIS, 2007).

Javier Solana, EU former High Representative for the Common Security and Defence Policy, in his famous statement, explains the core meaning of the European Security Strategy of 2003 by considering that is the EU's role to bring the peace in the world, to be the "force for good".

The peaceful unification of our continent has been our great achievement, and now our main challenge is to act as a credible force for good. From a continental agenda, we should move to a global agenda. From building peace in Europe to being a peace-builder in the world.

(Council of the European Union, 2007).

In the same year, during a speech to the College of Europe at Bruges, David Miliband proposes that the EU should aspire to be a "model power":

The EU has the opportunity to be a model power. It can chart a course for regional cooperation between medium-sized and small countries. Through its common action, it can add value to the national effort, and develop shared values amidst differences of nationality and religion. As a club that countries want to join, it can persuade countries to play by the rules, and set global standards. In the way it dispenses its responsibilities around the world, it can be a role model that others follow.

(Miliband, 2007)

This, "force for good", this "club that countries want to join", this "role model that others follow", is exactly the expression of normative power Europe, and it permeates the European Security Strategy of 2003 and the revisions that followed. The idea of the EU as a model, as a normative example to follow, is very similar to what by Cooper considered as a post-modern Europe as an example and a force to change the pre-modern states. Not surprisingly, it was the same Cooper who drew up the proposals for the new European External Action Service and for the Global Security Strategy of 2003. As discussed in the previous section, Cooper was both a practitioner involved in the creation of the EEAS and an academic, as well as a major promoter of the liberal-imperialistic idea (Delcourt, 2007).

The last Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) presented by High Representative Federica Mogherini in 2016 represents an important turning point regarding the ideational aspect of EU international identity³. More conscious of the international limits to its action, the EU seems to shift between "dreamy idealism and unprincipled pragmatism" (Biscop, 2016) under the new heading of what the EUGS calls "principled pragmatism". Several academics perceived the EUGS as a considerable change from the normative EU commitment (Czaputowicz, 2016 and Smith, 2017 among others), however, I argue that the new "doctrine" of principled pragmatism still contains a normative commitment and the EU is not giving up on the idea of spreading its values in the world.

The only difference from the previous approaches is that this philosophy entails a realistic look into the international sphere which imposes on the EU to be more modest in its external positioning. For instance, the EU is lowering the level of ambition in terms of democratisation not because its values of spreading the EU's conception of democracy changed, but more as an acceptance that the international situation does not allow anymore for the EU to have such a role: "This is all about being honest with ourselves. The EU cannot democratize Egypt, so it should not pretend to" (Biscop, 2016: 2). As Tocci puts it in an opening conference at the Institute of European Studies in Brussels:

"In 2003 the philosophy was: the world is moving towards our direction, and we have to be magnanimous enough to make them becoming like us, spreading our norms and values. Now the world is a different place and there is the risk of a push back of going. Therefore, we propose a principled pragmatism in which we do not give up our values and rules, but we consider the realism of the world".

(Tocci, 2016)

This late return to *realpolitik*, therefore, did not entail any self-reflection on the EU's identity and position in international relations. The EU still believes in being a "force for good", but it has to lower its ambitions in this sense, considering a changing world that might not be as receptive as before to its model role.

³ For a deeper analysis of the EUGS see Tocci, N. (2016). Interview with Nathalie Tocci on the global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy. *The International Spectator*, 51(3), 1-8.

1.3 From Civilian/Normative Power to Civilising Power

Simultaneously to this extensive debate about the nature of EU power, some scholars started reflecting on the implication of this narrative for contemporary politics. Taking inspiration from poststructuralist work on self/other constructions in international politics, and engaging in a debate with Manners, Thomas Diez argues that the discourse on normative power Europe involves practices of “othering” as part of constructing the international identity of the EU in opposition to others ((Diez, 2005: 15). In his discussion, Diez disputes that the idea of normative power, as well as the one of civilian power, is a practice of discursive representation rather than an objective category. Indeed, he argues that “not only is the success of this representation a precondition for other actors to agree to the norms set out by the EU; it also constructs an identity of the EU against an image of others in the ‘outside world’”(ibid.).

Consequently, he points out the importance of considering the power that lies in the representation of the EU as a normative power as such and he identifies different strategies (mainly securitisation and orientalism) by which the EU is legitimising its universal assumptions. In further works (2007;2011), Diez suggests there is a strong relationship between the concept of normative power proposed by Manners and the Gramscian notion of hegemony as both ideas rely on the generation of consent by means of ideological leadership. By relating these two notions, he implicitly admits that any articulation of EU identity is infused with power and that EU foreign relations are ruled by a sort of dominance by consensus. However, as he clearly states, he does not consider this practice as a “bad thing” *per se* (Diez and Manners, 2007: 186).

Yet, although Diez unfolds the importance of considering the role of power that acts in the discursive identity of the EU, he tends to judge this power to be neutral, underestimating the outcomes of this implicit normative superiority. Furthermore, despite a wide understanding of the character of political hegemony that underpins the foreign policy of the EU and creates a dichotomist construction of Self/Other, a historical account of the origin of this hegemonic power is missing. Indeed, what is still absent in Diez’s analysis is the incorporation of the historicity of the “civilian” discourses and their role in constructing the European/EU subject against other subjectivities.

An interesting contribution in this sense comes from Andreas Linklater which connected the concept of civilian/normative power with the idea of a civilising power.

Linklater is convinced that the idea of civilian power marks an important conceptual shift, which he identifies in the exportation of the European internal civilizing process to the international arena. In order to explain his ideas, he uses the analysis of the civilizing process undertaken by the leading European sociologist, Norbert Elias⁴. Although Elias did not describe the EU as a new stage in the development of the civilizing process, Linklater highlights several parallels between the interpretations of the EU as a civilian power and the transposition of Elias's work in international relations.

More specifically, Linklater argues that some of the forces which Elias described (the widening of the scope of emotional identification, the growing aversion to cruelty and suffering and the rise of internal checks on aggressive inclinations) have come to be embedded in a broadening European system of international relations.

According to Linklater, domestic value commitments have gradually come to influence relations between the European powers and their conduct towards the rest of the world, willing to redistribute wealth (2005). That is to say, the idea of a "civilian power Europe" can be regarded as an important new phase in the civilizing process.

However, elsewhere Linklater (2011) underlines another crucial aspect of the process of civilisation: it brought Europeans to see themselves as more advanced than peoples in other regions of the world. Indeed, for Elias, the process of civilisation that started in Europe was spread with the aid of colonialism. The "standard of civilisation" which Europeans invented in the 19th century to justify the domination of the non-European world is quoted by Elias as a clear example of how the civilizing process shaped the development of the society of states in relation to non-European others.

Although Linklater expresses the belief that the current process of civilisation should not be monopolized by European ideas, he also shows that Western societies have not shed earlier beliefs in cultural and racial superiority. Yet, Linklater's account seems

⁴ According to Elias, the civilizing process is the process by which individual European societies became pacified and the members of national populations came to identify more closely with one another between the 16th century and the present day (Elias, 1978).

riven with a sense of tension between two seemingly conflicting ethical positions. On the one hand, he advocates European civilian power as a fundamental step in the civilizing process for the transformation of human society. On the other hand, he admits that in this civilizing process a hierarchical and hegemonic dimension still survives, the historical opposition stressed by Elias.

That is quite similar to the argument made by Keene's critique of normative power. According to this scholar, having previously sought to 'civilize' Asian and African peoples, Europeans found it necessary to civilize themselves or those elements escaping from the civilizing mission. But once that internal project had been successfully completed, Europe assumed its new institutional forms and could return to its mission of exporting values to the outside world (Keene, 2013: 953).

Keene, therefore considers that the 'civilized' identity of 19th-century Europe was important in the delineation of normative power Europe, as the imperial powers were stressing already the 'normative difference' between Europe and the rest of the world (2013).

Keene goes further in his analysis by contending that "one reason for the relatively high prestige attached to the EU's 'normative difference' in international relations today is that it still draws on that legacy created in the 19th century". Keene wittily stresses the continuities between 'normative power Europe' today and in the 19th century, from a sociological point of view, albeit considering that the structure of domination relies on a very different sociological basis (see Keene, 2013: 954).

Within this debate, another remarkable tradition is the one that tries to make sense of European integration by using the category of 'empire'. In this context, the most important contribution to the literature is offered by Zielonka who tried to explain the EU enlargement process by offering the analogy of the EU as a neo-medieval empire (2006). The neo-medieval empire does not have to be confused with the empires of the last two centuries, which he considers rather as Westphalian empire models. According to him:

The Union does not engage in military conquests, forced territorial annexations, and the colonial type of economic extraction. The Union is largely a civilian power enlarging its territory by consent and diplomatic bargaining.

Although some poor countries, especially from the Third World, may find the Union's trade policies unduly discriminating, the Union is by and large seen as a vehicle of economic growth rather than economic exploitation. (2006: 183)

Despite the voluntary and non-coercive nature of this empire, Zielonka also described the large asymmetry of power between the EU and other states. In particular, in "The Ideology of Empire: the EU's Normative Power Discourse" (2011) he reflects on the normative self-image of the EU and its role in civilising the external environment. In this article, Zielonka took the distances from the contemporary debate about the moral virtues of European policies, considering the "EU's normative discourse as a device to legitimize the EU's imperial policies in its neighbourhood" (2011: 2). According to Zielonka, the EU's normative attitude legitimizes the role of the EU's empire through a post-modern *mission civilisatrice*. Continuing with this line of reasoning, that normative power is used to help peripheries of the empire but also to extend the EU's borders asserting the EU's political and economic control over the unstable and impoverished eastern part of the continent. In this analysis, the chance to generate positive outcomes for the empire relies on the legitimisation that the *mission civilisatrice* gains on formally sovereign actors. Indeed, Zielonka argues that normative power as *mission civilisatrice* is "equipped to determine the notion of legitimate behaviour, dictate international rules and impose domestic constraints to the periphery of the Empire" (*ibid*: 281).

But Zielonka is not the only one claiming for a use of the empire framework of analysis in the study of the EU⁵. Behr (2008), for instance, argues that EU accession politics operates in the legacies of 19th-century imperial rule after comparing the EU accession politics with 19th century 'standards of civilisation' developed by European states concluding treaties with non-European nations. More recently, a publication of 2016 "Revisiting the European Union as an Empire", collects the most relevant essays on this topic and seems to push this point further.

In the publication, Behr and Stivachtis suggest that we should use the concept of Empire as a framework to understand the EU. Their idea is to see Empire without conceiving it as something "evil, martial and aggressive", but to "reopen our

⁵ Other authors have attempted to make such analogy with regard different aspect of the EU. For an overview look at Behr, 2007; Böröcz, 2001; Diez, 1999; Eichengreen, 2008; Engelbrekt, 2002; Wæver, 1997; Beck and Grande, 2007; Philipson, 2002; Phelan, 2012)

imagination” to comprehend empire as the Latin idea of “imperium” /”patrocinium” (Behr & Stivachtis, 2015), as this notion encompasses meanings such as “order”, responsibility, authority, power, rule, mandate patronage, responsibility, protectorate, that could make the discourse of empire a valuable analytical concept for the study of contemporary politics.

The argument of these scholars, however, is less engaged in demonstrating empirically to what degree the EU can be seen as a form of empire, but rather builds on evidence of the existence of a form of empire and is interested in the question of how to mitigate possible collateral effects of such “imperium” and (re)integrate them in a framework of accountable politics (*ibid.*).

To summarise, the authors presented in this paragraph made an important connection between civilian/normative power and the legacy of the European civilising mission.

However, most of them considered this to be a positive feature, whereas others simply advocated for a mitigation of the possible negative effects of such power. None of them considered, therefore, that the EU should actually revise its identity in the international system.

This challenge has been instead undertaken by Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis in a relevant article published in 2013: “The decentering agenda: Europe as a post-colonial power”.

Moving further the debate, their intent is to carry out a paradigmatic shift that decenters the study and practice of EU’s international relations by acknowledging the inflexions of colonialism in the EU project itself.

The content of this article was anticipated in a previous work by Nicolaïdis and Howse (2002). Here, the authors identify the process in which the EU models itself on the utopia - the EUtopia - that it seeks to project on to the rest of the world to implement “the EU’s biggest project of all, its *mission civilisatrice*, which means to export its miracle to the rest of the world” (*ibid.* :782).

In the “Decentering Agenda,” the authors understand “the denial of Europe’s pre-world-war colonial past since the inception of the EU project” (Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis, 2013: 284). Moreover, once the predominance of attitudes in the current

EU identity that “echo the era of European imperialism” are asserted (*ibid.* : 285) these scholars investigate three possible routes to decentering the Eurocentric agenda: questioning the Eurocentric accounts of world history, engaging others’ perspectives and recognizing the historical patterns underpinning the EU’s external relations.

It must be acknowledged that this article is a turning point in EU Studies, as it challenges the Eurocentrism of the European messianic project and it locates the basis of the current Eurocentrism in the colonial past. However, although Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis give a remarkable contribution to lead the academic debate in a non-Eurocentric perspective, they do not address effectively the correlation between European imperialism and contemporary EU foreign policy. What does this legacy consist of, how is it deployed in the practices of foreign policy and how is it accepted by the “Other” countries?

These questions draw on the significant considerations contained in this article, so that the primary theoretical concern in this research might be seen as an attempt to expand the meaning of the “decentering agenda”, questioning the Eurocentric “civilisational” assumptions and trying to understand how much such civilizing discourses are manifest in contemporary EU peacebuilding practices. As the research seeks to study how the common thread of European superiority, vastly theorized and accepted within academia, has been employed in EU peacebuilding, it is also important to focus on the literature that so far has explored the deployment of the “EUniqueness” in peacebuilding, from the supporter to the critiques. And this will be elucidated in the next section of this chapter.

2. Civilising Legacy in EU Peacebuilding Literature

As it has been examined in the previous section, the argument that the EU is a normative, civilian or civilizing power has gained considerable attention. Moreover, the study of this putative “humanitarian” identity has been used as a theoretical basis for scholars analysing different aspects of EU’s foreign policy.

Peacebuilding scholars have been involved in this debate, as theories around EU civilian power have given rise to a similarly broad academic debate around the uniqueness of the EU’s ethics in international interventions and peacebuilding.

In this section, an overview of the main theories regarding EU civilian power in peacebuilding will be provided through a selection of authors that more directly have addressed the relationship between the practices of peacebuilding and the civilizing discourses. Before going into explaining those theories, I firstly conceptualize what peacebuilding is and track the main aspects of the peacebuilding debate in International Relations. Here the emphasis is given to the emergence of a critical movement in the discipline which has begun to rethink peacebuilding from a less Eurocentric paradigm. Despite a plethora of studies on “decentering” international peacebuilding, it is argued that a critical approach has only tentatively emerged within EU peacebuilding.

In this way, this will set the basis for the next section of the chapter in which a new approach is suggested in order to address the lacunae of the debate and to understand EU peacebuilding from a non-Eurocentric perspective.

2.1. The Liberal Peacebuilding Paradigm

Peacebuilding is commonly understood as a broad range of activities to solidify peace in conflict-prone and post-conflict countries and avoid the relapse into violent wars (Newman, Paris and Richmond, 2009). It implies the effort to render those countries in conformity with “the international system’s prevailing standards of domestic governance” (Paris, 2002: 638) which Oliver Richmond defined as being comprised of democratisation, economic liberalisation, neoliberal development, human rights and the rule of law (2007).

The current debate refers to the term “liberal peace” or “liberal peacebuilding” to name the dominant framework applied to post-conflict interventions since the end of the Cold War. The academic debate on peacebuilding seems to follow the polarisation that Cox, referring to IR, envisaged in 1981 between “critical voices” who reject the premise of international intervention and their inherent values, and “problem solvers” who study the fault of current peacebuilding efforts, but do not necessarily question their inherent value (Cox, 1981).

Within the “problem solvers”, we can see a recurrent linkage of peacebuilding with a civilizing ethos. The most direct example of the use of the notion of the civilizing mission to support peacebuilding can be observed in the work of Roland Paris. In his article “International peacebuilding and the *mission civilisatrice*”, the author declares that peacebuilding “resembles an updated and benign version of the *mission civilisatrice*, because, as the European imperial powers, peacebuilding has a duty to “civilize” dependent populations and territories” (Paris, 2002: 638).

In other words, from Paris’ view, the ideological justification underpinning peacebuilding is not to be blamed. Indeed, he is one of the most prominent defenders of liberal peacebuilding. In his famous articles “Saving Liberal Peace” Paris argues that liberal democratic forms of governance are best-suited for managing and mitigating political conflict. According to Paris, in the absence of any viable alternative, liberal peacebuilding’s demise “would be tantamount to abandoning tens of millions of people to lawlessness, predation, disease and fear” (Paris, 2010: 338).

In the same way, Kimberly Marten, in “Enforcing the Peace: Learning from the Imperial Past” (2004), gleans strategic lessons for peacebuilding from colonial times. She believes that liberal democracies in both eras have wanted to maintain a presence on foreign territory in order to make themselves more secure while sharing the benefits of their own cultures and societies. The author concludes that liberal peacebuilding is unrealistic, due to a lack of resources and international commitment, but also a desirable venture. Similarly, Niall Ferguson (2004) in his book “Colossus” declares he has no objection in principle to an American empire. Indeed, Ferguson believes that “many parts of the world would benefit from a period of American rule” as the “experiment with decolonisation has largely failed. For many countries across

the continent, the only hope is to be folded into a new empire, which could finish the job that the British started” (Ferguson, 2004:2).

The most shocking case in this sense is represented by the recent article published by Gilley, “The case for Colonialism” in which the author calls for a return of colonialism, citing the benefits of a “colonial governance” agenda which would involve overtaking state bureaucracies, recolonizing some areas, and creating new colonies “from scratch.” In his view, the new colonisation would assume the shape of a reinforced state-building- and peacebuilding process, in which a colonial governance agenda “resurrects the universalism of the liberal peace and with it a shared standard of what a well-governed country looks like”.

In contrast, several critical authors challenge this cosmopolitan universalism prevalent in peacebuilding literature (Duffield, 2001; Jabri, 2007; Mac Ginty, 2011, 2012; Pugh, 2004; Richmond 2005, 2011,2012; Selby, 2013; Tadjbakhsh, 2011, et al.). They point out that peacebuilding is a sort of social engineering internationally rendered (Jabri, 2007) through which Western-led agency, institutions, and NGOs attempt “to unite the world under a hegemonic system” (Richmond, 2011:1) that replicates liberal institutions, norms, and political, social, and economic systems. Between these critical voices, a clear interest in dismantling the myth of civilisation is blossoming in the last years.

Cunliffe (2012) provides an extensive overview of both supporters and critics of the imperial legacy in international peacekeeping and peacebuilding. He also argues that supporters of peacebuilding deploy an under-theorized and historically one-sided view of imperialism, whereas an exhaustive study of the theory and history of imperialism provides a rich resource for both the critique and conceptualisation of peacekeeping practice (212:426).

As Sabaratnam (2013) perceptively argues, in this critical debate there has been a fertile expansion of literature that challenges the Eurocentric assumptions of liberal interventions proposing a new “decolonized” standpoint⁶. For instance, Lidén (2011)

⁶Recent texts include, Hobson, J. M. (2004). *The Eastern origins of Western civilisation*. Cambridge, UK; New York, Cambridge University Press, Jones, B. G. (2006). *Decolonizing international relations*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Agathangelou, A. M. and L. H. M. Ling (2009). *Transforming world politics: from empire to multiple worlds*, Taylor & Francis, Bhabra, G. K. and R. Shilliam (2009). *Silencing human rights: critical engagements with a contested project*, Palgrave MacMillan. Mignolo,

stigmatizes the resemblance between peacebuilding and the civilizing mission. He notices that the theoretical underpinnings of liberal peacebuilding rely on “a colonial logic of development that reduces war-torn societies to states that have fallen from the ladder of human progress and need a cure of liberal state-building to get back on track” (Lidén, 2011:57). However, Lidén seems to distinguish between the theory of peacebuilding, which has a residual of the colonial heritage, and the practices of peacebuilding that, despite being a consequence of the colonial rationale, are not necessarily hegemonic.

Another example of this currently flourishing literature is the work of Sabaratnam (2011, 2013) which develops a critique of the debate on the liberal peace drawing inspiration from post-colonial thinkers, in order to engage the problematic of multifaceted and intersecting modes of domination through peacebuilding. Several scholars also suggest that the concept of peacebuilding still entails the civilized/barbarian divide, translated in democracies/non-democracies, strong/failed states in current parlance (see among others Duffield, 2001; Pugh, 2005, Heathershaw, 2008). Hughes and Pupavac (2005) assert that this divide fixes culpability for the war on the recipient societies in question by rendering the local populations dysfunctional while casting international rescue interventions as functional. In this sense, policy failures are seen as technical failures that can be fixed by re-jigging the concepts and tools of peacebuilding, but also as ideologically-driven interpretations of the assumed political inability, and/or passivity of post-conflict communities (*ibid*).

As Lidén summarizes (2011: 57), the main criticisms of liberal peacebuilding argue that it promotes Western culture at the expense of other cultures, norms and identities, consolidating the asymmetric power of “the global North” over “the global South” in spite of having a potentially positive local impact. In a similar vein, Jabri believes that peacebuilding projects might reinforce the hierarchical conception of subjectivities premised on the primacy of the European liberal self as against others (2011). She

W. and Escobar, A. (2010) Globalization and the Decolonial Option. London: Routledge. Nayak, M and Selbin, E. (2010). Decentering International Relations. London: Zed Books. Shillam, R. (2011). International Relations and Non Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity. New York: Routledge. Tadjbakhsh, S. (2011) Rethinking the Liberal Peace. External models and local alternatives. New York: Routledge. Hobson, J. M. (2012) The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010. Cambridge University Press. Seth, S. (ed) (2013). Postcolonial Theory and International Relations. A critical Introduction. London: Routledge. Jabri, V (2013). The Postcolonial subject. Claiming politics/governing others in the late modernity. London: Routledge.

interprets peace operations as being driven by a late modern form of colonial rationality wherein the imperative to govern populations precedes and informs practices on the ground (see Jabri 2011, 2013).

Accordingly, Darby sees peacebuilding as “cast in the mould of colonialism” (2009: 703) and its contention shows how imperial peacekeeping had an afterlife during and following the process of decolonisation, becoming a structural part of the current international peacebuilding. Darby also attempts to demonstrate the interconnection between security, development and the neoliberal economic order to show how humanitarianism has been hitched to the support of a highly inequitable global order (*ibid*). This criticism, that leaves an impression of liberal peacebuilding as a form of social engineering (Jabri, 2011) or a form of imperialism “in denial” (Chandler, 2006a), are mainly rooted in the idea that peacebuilding operations do not take into account the specific political, socioeconomic context of the recipient countries, applying blueprint measures (democratisation, open market, human rights and the rule of law among other) that are not always sensitive to the local environment. So doing, “First World” knowledge is valorised whereas the distinctive understandings of people in the rest of the world are marginalized or not recognized as knowledge at all; the problems to be tackled are located ‘out there’, in the otherness of the non-European world.

A growing literature on critical political economy highlights how international intervention in post-conflict economies can exacerbate the challenges of transformation by propelling the political economies of war-torn societies into a scheme of global convergence towards market liberalisation. The imposition of an open market, in most of the cases, tends to aggravate problems by increasing the vulnerability of populations to poverty and shadow economic activity (see Pugh, 2005, 2011; Pugh, Cooper and Turner, 2008).

Moreover, the introduction of liberal measures tends to replicate rather than transform power and authority, because for most of the cases it links the interveners with the local elite, with the effect of reaffirming unjust social and political divisions⁷. Mostly, the idea of local ownership, widely boasted by new bottom-up approaches on

⁷ For a better understanding of the relationship between the local and the international actors see, among others: Donais, 2009; Hirblinger & Simons, 2015; Leonardsson, & Rudd, 2015; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013.

peacebuilding, tend to privilege a particular group of locals, empowering some actors and disempowering others. (see Hirblinger and Simons, 2015; Jabri, 2013a).

Mobilising postcolonial and anticolonial approaches, Sabaratnam (2011) observes how peacebuilding not only is an alien practice, proposed by external interveners, but it is also alienating part of the local population, to the extent that it rarely entails an appropriation and actively underestimates local efforts to reach an autonomous recovery.

Peacebuilding sets the limits of the collective frames in which social and political life is grounded. Locked into a world, not of their making, non-Western people tend to find the idea very difficult to autonomously restart a political process after an invasive external intervention, with the conclusion that this process profoundly disadvantages them (see Darby, 2011; Jabri, 2013b and Sabaratnam, 2011). Thus, through a postcolonial lens, peacebuilding could be interpreted as a way of marginalising the struggle of non-European peoples for economic justice and racial equality. In turn, this determines a depoliticisation of the internal setting, by reducing the political sphere in something that could be managed from the outside. Jabri (2013b), for example, argues that international interventions prevent the postcolonial countries from their “right to politics” and their right to be political subjects. She advocates for the access of the postcolonial subject to politics, independence and for autonomous access to the “international”.

2.2. African Scholarly Approaches to Peacebuilding

The field of peace and conflict studies had been mostly discussed by and within Western institutions; and indeed continues to be largely comprised of scholars who predominantly hail from Europe and North America. Besides recent improvements in inclusivity, this field of scholarship tends to not take into account the fact that Africans had established and tested indigenous approaches and methods of conflict management and resolution many decades prior to any Western conceptualised approaches (see Aubyn, 2018 and Francis, 2007 among others). This universalisation of peacebuilding theories and methodologies will be discussed alongside its specific consequences in chapter seven, where the thesis will reflect on

the fact that the marginalisation of African views on peacebuilding from the EU might be one of the causes of the effectiveness of EU peacebuilding in the case of DRC.

The dominant European and North American approach to peacebuilding has limited and marginalised the emerging of the ‘Africanist worldview’ of peacebuilding (Aubyn, 2018). Against this backdrop, it is important to notice that there has been a remarkable expansion in African scholarly writing on peacebuilding and this growing scholarship is giving substantial contributions to the global peacebuilding debate.

Although diverse perspectives are evident in the foregoing analysis of African peacebuilding literature, in recent years most of the African scholars have been concerned with the issue of “the suitability and sustainability of the liberal governance framework within the Africa context” (Aubyn, 2018: 25). The liberal peace approach is widely criticised by African scholars for its state-centric, top-down approach to dealing with the needs of post-conflict countries. According to Funmi Olonisakin and Alfred Muteru for example, the major premises of internationally-supported peacebuilding efforts obscure the important contributions that African traditional systems can make toward advancing peace. On the contrary, they argue that the local context and informal actors and initiatives need to be prioritised in the peacebuilding process.

Related to this, many of the African researchers surveyed consider that the principle of local ownership, largely theorised in Western scholarly practices, has not been reflected on the ground, thus leading to the failure of sustainable practices. Citing some practical cases from the DRC, Josaphat Musamba Bussy and Carol Jean Gallo locate the cause of the failures of the UN and World Bank peacebuilding interventions within the liberal governance framework in Eastern DRC. According to Bussy and Gallo, interventions failed because the premises were wrong: they argued that intervenes considered that the primary reason conflict persists in the DRC was due to the absence of a strong liberal state, leading to the implementation of programs of a primarily top-down fashion, despite discourse on the importance of local ownership.

Against this orthodox liberal approach, some scholars proposed different approaches based on hybridisation processes as a way to capture the complexity of the interactions between internal and external actors in peacebuilding contexts (see Bah, 2015; Aning

& Aubyn, 2018 among others). Others suggested to disengage completely from the liberal paradigm and to find solutions from de-lining from Western structures and finding a decolonial African way to peace (see for instance Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013)

2.3. The EU Peacebuilding Debate

While there is an increasingly prolific critical debate in IR challenging the Western postulations of liberal peacebuilding and the use of an updated civilizing narrative, in EU Studies a certain under-representation of such critical analysis can be observed. The attention of scholars seems to be more focused on UN-US international peacebuilding missions rather than on EU peacebuilding. Some studies have also looked at the way in which specific national peacebuilding policies present imperial features, mostly focusing on the case of imperial legacies in French interventions in Africa (see, Bergamaschi & Diawara, 2014; Charbonneau 2008, 2009, 2014). This leaves the study of EU peacebuilding and its colonial legacy quite unexplored.

This might be due to the limitation of how the EU Study evolved as a discipline, briefly sketched in the introduction. The strong prominence of the civilian/normative power discourse in the EU, which have always described the EU with ideational and essentialist features, monopolised the debate by implying a postulate of superiority that for a long time did not leave rooms to critical voices.

Nevertheless, in the following part of the chapter, an examination of the works of four authors is provided that mainly contribute to the critical debate on EU peacebuilding: Michael Merlingen, Oliver Richmond, David Chandler and Olivia Rutazibwa.

Michael Merlingen examines the role and governance of the CSDP missions through a Foucauldian perspective. He moves his critiques from the Manners' constructivist idea of normative power, arguing that to comprehend entirely EU peacebuilding we should make a conceptual shift through the notion of normalizing power (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė, 2006). Borrowing the Foucauldian concept of normalisation⁸, Merlingen argues that EU peacebuilding in its normalizing mode brings into play microphysical and non-sovereign forms of power that circulate through opaque capillaries,

⁸ Normalisation can be defined as a construction of an idealized norm of conduct that reward or punish individuals for conforming to or deviating from an ideal, generating the maximum social control (Foucault, 1977).

generating constraints and domination (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė, 2006:3). Using the Foucauldian toolkit Merlingen represents the normalizing power as a technology of power that extends CSDP governmentality (2012: 188). Furthermore, he argues that one of the main power effects of EU governmentality is that the ethical dimension of the CSDP discourse goes hand in hand with the discursive disempowerment of theatres of operation: they are in need of EU encouragement, assistance, support, guidance and discipline. (Merlingen, 2012:201).

What at first glance appears an appealing theory, however, becomes quite controversial when the author tries to produce a reformatory agenda to minimize CSDP domination. He controversially envisages a “certain correspondence between Foucault’s political ethics and a more general ethos of liberal democracy” (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė, 2006:32). Therefore, his mission turns to be “a firm normative commitment to enhance and provide a vigilant defence of liberal institutions and values against attack from within and from outside” (Stenson 1998: 338).

A somewhat similar concern with the “illiberal” sides of the liberal peacebuilding animates the work of Oliver Richmond. Also inspired by Foucault, he shows how peacebuilding consolidates a hegemonic worldview, drawing a parallel between peacebuilding and colonial projects of improvement. He, thus, suggests that the peace implanted by peacebuilders is “simulated to be as it is in liberal states, though in practice it may be more like the situation that existed in former colonial dependencies” (Richmond 2004: 85).

Such continuity between these two sets of practices encounters Richmond’s central problematic of alterity. The author disagrees with the way in which the liberal peace deals with “the other”, describing this phenomenon as the Orientalism of peace (2005, 2011).

Richmond calls for a modification of the liberal peace without necessarily calling for its abandonment, proposing an emancipatory post-liberal peace which is assumed to be equal, local-oriented and non-hegemonic. As Merlingen does, he attempts to retain the liberal peace while modifying its core. However, in the new post-liberal peace there remains a visible tension between the West and its Others as if the local recipients were unbridgeable categories. In short, a fine-grained analysis of this author’s work

allows for the conclusion that there is a contradiction between his general vision of peacebuilding as Orientalist, Eurocentric and hypocritical and his particular solution to this concern. Indeed, post-liberal peacebuilding seems to reproduce a moderate version of the same dominant logic that he criticizes.

This Eurocentric residual view is even more problematic when he considers EU peacebuilding. Indeed, Richmond emphasizes that the EU has the potential to develop more balanced politics between security, active intervention and a more sophisticated notion of peace. Its added value, the normative commitment, according to Richmond, gives the EU an opportunity to produce a more far-reaching version of the global peacebuilding project and allows for the creation of strong legitimacy on the ground (Björkdahl, Richmond and Kappler, 2009). Both Merlingen and Richmond give the impression of establishing a conversation that is strongly anchored in a liberal Eurocentrism with their preoccupations and in their configuration of alternatives. Between these critical authors, the distinctive character of European civilisation is used to promote EU peacebuilding and to envisage possible solutions to the current problems of the liberal peace system. In other words, sustaining the uniqueness of the EU in peacebuilding, they reproduce the discourse of civilisation, generating what can be described as an “uncritical critique”. As Wallerstein (1997) argues, many critical literatures reproduce tropes of Eurocentrism in their analyses and this is more than ever self-evident in EU Studies.

Through his extensive fieldwork in Bosnia (1999, 2006a, 2010b) David Chandler criticizes the high-handed use of “illiberal” power by EU forces engaged in the peacebuilding crusade: censorship, manipulation of elections, removal of democratically elected officials and other forms of “repression of the democratic rights of people who are supposed to be learning about democracy” (Hulsman, 2002: 97). In his analysis, Chandler argues (2006a) that such measures created an order in the international intervention which derogates norms of sovereignty and self-determination that were the outcome of decolonisation.

In a more recent publication, he considers the discursive continuity between colonialism and peacebuilding and traces the discursive steps that allowed the racial discourse to remain anchored in the international peacebuilding system (2010d), highlighting that a historical analysis is a key to understanding the peacebuilding

discourses of intervention. However, whereas Chandler's first body of research failed to engage with the historical continuities that allowed the deployment of an illiberal EU peacebuilding, this latest work fails to engage with the specific EU practices and discourses through which peacebuilding operates in such international projects of improvement.

An important voice in this debate is Olivia Rutazibwa. In the light of decades of unsuccessful state-building and peacebuilding efforts, she decided to investigate the feasibility of fewer interventions, by studying the case of EU interventions in Africa (2006;2010;2013). Starting from the conceptual framework of EU as an "ethical intervener" she described how such values are translated into interventions on African soils that have the criteria of inequality, and self-centred intervention, where the objective is more into raising the image of the EU rather than achieving peacebuilding or state-building goals. In this important study, where the mechanism of Eurocentric intervention is clearly spelt out, however, there is no space to engage with European history in order to understand the origins of such "EU's ethical interventions".

Conclusion

The review of the literature conducted in this chapter provides an overview of the debate about EU peacebuilding and the colonial legacy.

In the first part section, it shows the main theories regarding the nature of the EU's identity and power in international relations. It considers that, for decades, in EU Studies there has been a consensual belief about the distinctiveness of EU identity as an ontologically benign and superior actor. This belief was divulged by different notions of civilian, normative or ethical power Europe. The chapter then engages with those scholars that started to connect the idea of civilian/normative/ethical power with a civilisational aspect, considering that such normative, value-based vision of the EU implied a postulate of superiority that had lots in common with colonial reasoning.

In the second section, the civilian/civilising debate is put in the context of the EU peacebuilding literature, showing the main contribution to this discussion and the limitations.

In making their important contributions to the EU peacebuilding debate, in terms of discourses, political relations and ethics, some of these authors demonstrated a preoccupation with deconstructing its resonances with imperialism and colonialism. However, these notions floated at various points in the debate are never fully explored: Diez considers the EU as hegemonic power; Nicholaidis and Fisher Onas propose a decentering agenda for the normative power Europe; Merlingen points out the normalizing aspects of the CSDP, and Rutazibwa looked at the intervener-centric mechanism of EU intervention. None of the authors actually engages in a study of what colonial legacies might represent in EU peacebuilding discourse and practices.

In order to achieve a historical comprehension of the discourses of civilisation deployed in EU peacebuilding and to analyse how peacebuilding policymakers deal with the colonial legacy of the EU, a broader approach is required. The next chapter charts such an approach through discussing how Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory are mobilised in order to allow a historical look into the colonial discourse in EU peacebuilding policymaking towards DRC.

Chapter Two

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

*For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.
They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game,
but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.
(Lorde, 2012)*

Introduction

The analysis of the literature in the previous chapter shows that only recently have scholars started to understand the historicity of the EU identity and its consequences in EU foreign policy. Building on the effort of such scholars to uncover the historicity of the EU's international power and action, this thesis proposes to continue in this direction and to explicitly analyse if and how colonial legacy is present in EU peacebuilding practices.

In this sense, the previous chapter set the stage for the engagement of a postcolonial and decolonial perspective which is the point of departure of this chapter. Here the reflection moves to how a postcolonial and decolonial perspective can aid in unmasking colonial legacies in the EU's construction of peacebuilding practices in DRC.

By answering this question, the theoretical and methodological framework of reference for the thesis is explained. I propose a theoretical perspective that relies on postcolonial/decolonial theory and a coherent methodological choice that approaches the study of colonial discourse by applying Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).

The choice of combining the theoretical and methodological framework into one chapter is due to the interlinked nature of the two aspects, which is better understood if enclosed in the same reasoning.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first one is dedicated to the explanation of postcolonial and decolonial theories, considering that both theories offer challenging and provocative ways of thinking about the colonial origin of Western superiority. By connecting the present to the colonial structure of power, postcolonial and decolonial thoughts are engaged in deconstructing dominant accounts and showing their historical continuities.

Arguing for a combination of postcolonial and decolonial perspectives, the section further explains what it means to undertake such an approach in the analysis of EU peacebuilding policy in DRC.

The second section is dedicated to the core concept of colonial discourse. Here, the postcolonial approach is infused with the Foucauldian/poststructuralist understanding of discourse, in order to explain how certain colonial knowledge is produced and reproduced towards a system of power and knowledge.

If the general postcolonial/decolonial theory tells about the vivid colonial underpinnings of our present, the concept of colonial discourse allows us to understand how colonial power and knowledge has been reproduced along with history. It allows us to also unmask the presence of such a legacy today.

Therefore, the third section presents a methodological framework for the analysis of colonial discourses. Despite a plethora of studies on colonial discourses (see Bhabha, 1984 and 1994; Mohanty, 1988; Said, 1978; Smith, 2012 [1999]; Chrisman & Williams, 2015; Parry, 1987; Vidal, 1993 among others) this research identifies a certain gap in the way such discourses have been methodologically analysed. It is, indeed, very difficult to find in postcolonial and decolonial literature clear “methodological tools” that can answer questions such as: How to analyse colonial discourses? How to claim that a certain discourse is colonial? How to compare colonial discourses over time? How to operationalise a diachronic and synchronic comparison of colonial discourses?

In order to find an answer to such questions, the thesis seeks to make a methodological contribution by bridging the theoretical analysis of colonial discourses (Colonial Discourse Theory) with discourse analysis, privileging the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) part of the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology.

After showing this methodology, the final section of the chapter is dedicated to the methods used in the research: it limits the subjects and objects of analysis, it explains the importance of locating the researcher's positionality and shows the empirical sources and ways of gathering data.

1. Bridging Postcolonial and Decolonial Thought

There are a number of outstanding works outlining the fields of postcolonial and decolonial studies as a whole⁹ and it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive overview here, given the variety of contributions that have been written across the humanities and social sciences. Instead, I wish simply to pick up on some of the defining features and debates that are significant to offer a theory that supports this study.

Postcolonial Studies emerged in the late 1970s as a field of academic study, mostly associated with literary studies. While recognizing a common heritage to earlier poststructuralist practitioners and anti-colonial political thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Gandhi and Albert Memmi among others, postcolonial theorists brought the debate to a different level. Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, as the main pathbreakers of Postcolonial Studies, instead of thinking of postcolonialism as primarily or exclusively a form of political action in a historically defined period, began to use the term also to refer to a mode of theoretical analysis (Nichols, 2010:115).

The birth of postcolonialism was inspired by poststructuralism in the critique of Western epistemology and in the theorisation of cultural alterity/difference and “otherness” (see Gandhi, 1998: ix). It has also been inspired by materialist

⁹ For a better understanding of postcolonial theory, see, among others: Bhabha, H. K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge; Césaire, A. (1972). *Discourse on colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press; Fanon, F. (2006). *The wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.; Guha, R. (1997). *Dominance without hegemony. History and power in colonial India*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Epstein, C. (2014). The postcolonial perspective: an introduction. *International Theory*, 6(2), 294-311; Loomba, A. (1998). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. London: Routledge; Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage. Spivak, G. C. (1988). *Can the subaltern speak?* In C. Nelson, ed. & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* pp. (pp. 271–313). London: Macmillan.

philosophies, such as Marxism, that supplied most of the basis for postcolonial politics (ibid.)

The postcolonial, different from the anti-colonial, has a clear temporal and spatial definition. Time-wise, it does not signify the end of colonialism, but rather it accurately reflects both the continuity and persistence of colonizing practices, as well as the critical limits and possibilities it has engendered in the present historical moment (see Chowdhry and Nair, 2002:11). Klor de Alva, for example, suggests that postcoloniality should “signify not so much subjectivity ‘after’ the colonial experience as a subjectivity of opposition to imperialising/colonising discourses and practices (1995:245).

In the same manner, postcolonial is not a geographical concept. Indeed, postcolonial authors do not refer to the countries that have previously been colonized as the sole subject of inquiry.

On the contrary, postcolonial theory is more interested in the phenomenon of colonialism as the moment in which, using Stuart Hall’s words, “different temporalities and histories have been irrevocably and violently yoked together” (1996: 252). And it is exactly due to this violent union of different entities that it is impossible to consider postcolonialism as the study of a geographically specific area. Indeed, one of the principal values of this theory is to explain how, from the sixteenth century onwards, a polycentric system of cultures and histories was turned into a monocentric one, with the result of rendering it impossible to “disentangle, conceptualise or narrate discrete entities: though that is precisely what the dominant Western historiographical tradition has often tried to do” (ibid).

Hence, postcolonial studies take into account both the colonised and colonising worlds with the specific intention of disrupting the old colonising/colonised binary that perversely bound together the colonial world, in order to present a new positive conjuncture for a globalised postcolonial world.

Following Bhabra (2007: 16), we can say that postcolonialism should be understood in this temporal and spatial condition as an epistemic marker that allows a reflective engagement with the experience of colonisation and its power to shape past and current realities. This implies, first of all, a recognition that the world has been

decisively shaped by colonialism and that “one cannot even begin to understand the contemporary situation if this fact is not acknowledged and explored in all its ramifications” (Seth, 2012: 1).

Postcolonial theory also carries an epistemological objective. It “questions the universality of the categories of modern scientific and social thought and of the disciplines into which it is divided” (Seth, 2012: 1). The awareness of Eurocentric categories that allow us to interpret the world leads postcolonial scholars to argue for a deconstruction of categories such as civil society, state, nation, sovereignty, individual, subjectivity, development and so on. Indeed, echoing Chakrabarty, the current way of knowing the world is the product of a dominant Eurocentric account of the reality that in the course of history has tended to marginalize non-European narratives (Chakrabarty, 2009).

Acknowledging other regional and global configurations that are challenging European primacy in the international system, postcolonial scholars try to deconstruct the “imaginary figure” of Europe, that “remains deeply embedded in cliché and shorthand forms” in the majority of international relations and in the social sciences to address questions of political modernity as well (Chakrabarty, 2009: 3). By reflecting on global historical events and local resistance to universalisation, challenging concepts and power-relations that flow from the top-down, from the centre to the periphery, postcolonialism is interested in showing why the dominant accounts of the international are deficient. Postcolonialism is also concerned with detecting how the general conceptualisation of the world has been based on controlled absences and elimination of claims by non-European voices.

Finally, a postcolonial take on is necessary not only to rethink disciplinary categories and academic concepts but to apply it in the present reality. In this sense, postcolonialism seeks to propose its alternative knowledge into international power structures and to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce more just and equitable relations between the different peoples of the world (Young, 2002).

Very similar to the postcolonial in scope and approach, decolonial scholarship was born in Latin America as a political and epistemic project aimed at eliminating the

tendency to consider Western European modes of thinking as universal ones (Quijano, 2000).

Decolonial authors as Anibal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Pablo Gonzalez Casanova and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Santiago Castro Gomez and Walter D. Mignolo believe that the fundamental element of modernity is the global condition of “coloniality”: a living legacy of colonialism in contemporary societies that outlived formal colonialism and became integrated into succeeding social orders.

Coloniality names the “underlying logic of the foundation and development of Western civilisation of which colonialisms have been constitutive” (Mignolo, 2011:20). Decolonial authors believe that the binomial modernity/coloniality emerged with the European invasion and foundation of the Americas and the Caribbean and the massive trade of enslaved Africans.

From these historical events, the so-called “colonial matrix of power” (see Escobar and Mignolo, 2013) operates on a series of interconnected heterogeneous historic-structural nodes, whose legitimacy is anchored in the principles of colonial separation (West/East or North/South), in the apparatus of enunciation of such diversity (through categories of thought, social actors, and institutions) and the reproduction of such hierarchies through the continuity of education.

Mignolo goes further in this analysis by tracing the stages and transformations of the colonial matrix over the past five hundred years, concluding that the logic of coloniality went through successive and cumulative stages presented positively in the rhetoric of modernity: specifically in the terms salvation, progress, development, modernisation and democracy (see Mignolo, 2011).

As a reaction to the logic of coloniality that generates and reproduces interconnected hierarchies, those scholars propose to get out of the mirage of modernity and the trap of coloniality through a decolonial approach, which is “a relentless analytic effort to understand, in order to overcome, the logic of coloniality underneath the rhetoric of modernity, the structure of management and control that emerged out of the transformation of the economy in the Atlantic, and the jump in knowledge that took place both in the internal history of Europe and in-between Europe and its colonies” (Mignolo, 2011: 11) .

As should be ostensible from the preceding discussion, postcolonialism and decoloniality have several points in common: both rose out of the contestation of the modern order established by European colonialism, both are devoted to changing this world order and both are also interested in analysing the relationship between the production of knowledge and power (see Bhambra, 2014a).

Despite that, decolonial and postcolonial scholars have tended to be quite in opposition, the former accusing the latter of being a project of transformation limited to the academy (see Mignolo 2007: 452). It is true that each theory emerged in different socio-historical contexts (Indian in the case of postcolonial theory and Latin American in the case of decolonial theory) and carries its specific features, but this does not undermine the importance of considering the multiple commonalities of the two approaches.

In her brilliant book “Connected Sociologies”, Bhambra (2014a) puts in communication postcolonial and decolonial literature by proposing a connected approach that can reveal the radical potential of both traditions “in unsettling and reconstituting standard processes of knowledge production” (2014b: 115)

Both the decolonial and postcolonial approach are indeed aimed at challenging the persistence of this Western logic of power which continues to organize the multiple heterogeneous global hierarchies in the global present towards forms of domination and exploitation, even after colonialism has formally retreated from most of the world.

For both postcolonial and decolonial theorists, the project of colonisation is a model of power at the foundation of the modern experience, of the capitalist paradigm and a system of domination structured around the idea of race (see Maldonado-Torres, 2010).

Moreover, both literatures argue that the “imaginary” of the modern/colonial world arose from the complex articulation of power that suppressed some marginalised memories in order to make only the dominant understanding of history emerge.

In this sense, both a postcolonial and decolonial critique of International Relations seeks to deconstruct the modern world and the exercise of the coloniality of power and to give voice to marginalised accounts in global history.

It is from this meaningful conjunction of decolonial and postcolonial theories that the theoretical perspective of this thesis is derived, in the interest of using both the postcolonial ‘discursive’ understanding - more inspired by poststructuralist analysis - and the useful decolonial framework of coloniality of power. Therefore this thesis will engage with this point of conjunction that is already present elsewhere in the literature (see Staeger, 2016 for instance) and embrace both scholarships, with the understanding that this “connection” (Bhabra, 2014) provides more tools for a radical critique of the present condition. Moreover, putting together these two lines of scholarship has the positive consequence of strengthening the critique, and bolstering it against the risk of recurrent fragmentation that is so present in critical academic disciplines. In other words: “Which part of the story that belongs together, do we keep in telling separately; chopping up in separate bits pieces that have seemingly nothing to do with one another?” (Quijano, 2000 as quoted in Rutazibwa, 2019: 166). Straddling both scholarly traditions requires this research to embrace stricter intellectual resistance to forms of epistemological and material dominance disseminated by the colonial order and make them manifest in the specific case analysed in the thesis.

More specifically, the ‘postcolonial’ can be a useful analytical tool for the description of incomplete European decolonisation and the dominance of European knowledge and discourses, and the ‘decolonial’ could be mobilised as the prescription by contemporary anti-colonial scholarship to overcome such postcolonial condition (Staeger, 2016). In this sense, the thesis does not find analytical difficulties in following those scholars who make use of both concepts together as a way of reinforcing the critique and obtaining a stronger set of instruments to analyse the object of study (see for instance Rodríguez, Boatcă & Costa, 2016; Samier, 2013).

It is indeed thanks to the postcolonial and decolonial analysis – their epistemological disruptions and analytical interventions - that it is possible to comprehend the colonial underpinnings of the EU project, not taking as neutral the EU peacebuilding narratives and discourses that the EU is promoting and that EU scholars are producing and reproducing. Being committed to this critical scrutiny means wanting to find out if there are such legacies in EU peacebuilding policymaking discourses, and ultimately to disrupt such discourses.

1.2. African Perspectives on Decolonial Epistemology

Zimbabwean historian Ndlovu Gatsheni (2013a) states that African intellectuals have found it very difficult to ‘unthink’ the epistemologies created by enlightenment/Western intellectuals and to “reproduce itself outside these relations” (Quijano 2007: 169), and a “scholarship by analogy” (Ibid.) has pervaded some of the influential intellectual works in and on Africa (see also Mamdani 1996 and Zeleza, 2006).

The difficulty that some African scholars demonstrate revolves around thinking about the African future without mimicking Western epistemology: how to reflect about democracy outside of the liberal democracy framework, or how to talk about the African public sphere without repeating the notions drawn by Habermas? At the same time, it is also about struggling to set themselves free “from the neurosis of victimhood inflicted on Africans by a combination of exploitative and demeaning processes of the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid.” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 28)

Despite these constraints, a growing body of African scholars use decolonial epistemology as a liberatory language and political manifesto for the future for Africa (see for instance Ahluwalia, 2001; Keikelame & Swartz , 2019; Mamdani 1996; Mhango, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Nhemachena, Mlambo & Kaundjua, 2016; Osaghae, 2006; Zeleza, 2006).

For these authors, a decolonial approach - or decolonial-liberationist paradigm as Ndlovu-Gatsheni calls it - is a way to enable Africans to re-launch themselves on a radical struggle to create a post-imperial and postcolonial future that the post-1945 decolonisation project failed to achieve (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a; 2013b and 2013c).

Osaghae, for instance, believes that a decolonial-liberationist narrative of the African should move away from evaluating the African states in conformity with the precepts of liberalism, and should be aware of the extent to which emancipating and liberatory aspects remained submerged within the complex colonial matrices of power (Osaghae, 2006). Similarly, Moyo and Yeros (2007) contended that African nationalism did not

manage to completely rise above the core contradictions generated by the colonial imprinting, which includes repressive, authoritarian and intolerant tendencies.

Most of the African decolonial authors share the opinion that Africa has not fully succeeded in bringing about full decolonisation, believing that the colonial set-up of the state had drastic consequences for the development and reconfiguration of the African public sphere and the overall structure of postcolonial political communities. Decolonial epistemology and action could work to continue writing the “unfinished story of liberation from colonialism, neocolonialism, neo-liberal imperialism and hegemonic globalization” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 256).

2. Colonial Discourses

Central to the postcolonial analysis is the notion of “colonial discourse”. This concept is influenced by a Foucauldian/poststructuralist understanding of discourse, which no longer refers to formal linguistic aspects or a mere system of linguistic signs, but as a practice that systematically constructs the subjects and the worlds of which they speak, contributing to creating a regime of truth (Foucault, 1971; 1972; 1976). In this sense, colonial discourse can be seen as a way in which colonial knowledge is produced and reproduced as a “system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998:42).

Colonial discourse is produced by an authority possessing the power to make pronouncements on an object: the coloniser over the colonized typically, acknowledging a certain elasticity of the two terms (see Spivak, 2003). This power is exerted in a discursive way, by creating a one-sided discourse. In this way, a discourse can also be described as “an institutionalized way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power” (Link, 1983:60 as quoted in Jäger and Meyer: 2009) under historically located conditions (see also Foucault, 1971; 1972).

The colonial discourse is itself performative to the extent that it has a constitutive and foundational nature. As Spivak pointed out, discourses are a “way of worlding” (1985: 243), of appropriating the world through knowledge. The strands of knowledge with which we try to describe and understand the world are produced in complex power relations in which different actors and institutions work to establish a dominant interpretation of "reality", through what Foucault called discursive practices and discursive formation.

It is in regard to the understanding of discourse as an instance of hegemony that Said and Spivak look at the question of what kind of truth has been produced within the context of European colonialism. Furthermore, they investigate what kind of descriptions of the world, people and things have been discursively conveyed as the "Other" in the name of the "Orient" and the "gendered subalternised Other" (Diaz-Bone, Rainer; Bührmann, et al., 2007).

The colonial discourse creates the context in which meaning itself is produced, a special “regime of truth” is indeed created (Foucault 1971, 1972): this entails the creation of an image of the incoming people as colonisers, the indigenous people as the legitimate targets of colonisation, and consequently the justification of the civilising by the former of the latter. In this sense, colonial discourses both shape and reflect everyday colonial experiences; they provide an apparatus of self-restraint for colonial subjects. In so doing, colonial discourses work as a justification of colonial exploitation: they aim toward imposing grounding principles for perception, thought and action in colonial society.

Colonial discourse masks the power relations between races, cultures, and nations by making them seem natural, scientific, and objective. In other words, colonial discourse normalises the colonial regimes of truth (Foucault, 1976). Colonial discourse, therefore, produces stereotypes from within European prejudices, beliefs, and myths. For instance, the myth of the effeminate Bengali male was a centrepiece of European discourses from the mid-eighteenth century. Over a period of time, this problematic stereotype was treated as an objective description even by natives.

Stereotypes and representations, over the course of colonial time, have masqueraded as philanthropy, civilizing missions or scientific observations. In this form, they enabled Europeans to attain and retain power over the natives. Although it is generated within the society and cultures of the colonisers, the colonial discourse also became the reality within which the colonized may also come to see themselves (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013). As such, constructions of the hierarchy were pervasive to the point of becoming reflexive.

Kristin Kopp identifies instances of “discursive colonisation” to describe “a historically situated process that repositions a specific relationship between self and Other into colonial categories” and terms “material colonisation”, involving “various forms of economic, political, and/or cultural subjugation of a native population by a foreign minority entering their space” (2012:6). However, taking issue with this rigid division of discourse and practice, this thesis rests primarily on identifying a co-constitutive relationship in the production of meaning and the material process of colonisation: discourses are practices that depend on power, but at the same time also generate power. Discourses both constitute the individual and the collective.

Indeed, it can be said that the subject is a product of discourses that enable the subject to determine actions that create materialisations. In fact, discursive practices work in both inhibitive and productive ways, implying a play of prescriptions that designate both exclusions and choices (Foucault, 1981b). In this sense, colonial discourses are a form of violence - actual and symbolic - that normalises, disciplines, differentiates, segregates and excludes.

As it has previously been said that discourses shape and enable social reality, it is safe to also say that discourses are a material reality, in their co-constitutive (or performative) relation with their material production. The co-constitutive aspect of discourses leads to the awareness that the critique undertaken is also the result of discursive processes because it is not situated outside discourse, as this would contradict the fundamental assumptions of discourse analysis.

Thus, every analysis entails the need to take a stand and the analyst must be conscious of the discursive production that outcomes of his works could generate. In this sense, Foucault talks about “discursive practices” as the process through which a dominant reality comes into being towards forms of power and domination (see Foucault, 1981a).

Foucault sees discourses as potentially discontinuous across history rather than necessarily progressive and cumulative. Indeed, discourse and discourse strands have history, present and future (Jäger and Meyer: 51), and in this history, they are not always coherent and linear, but they are subjects of changes, ruptures and recurrences. History can be conceived as the sum of different epistemes, which are structures underlying the production of knowledge in a particular time and place. This is a key element in his analysis and critique of official or dominant knowledge that often derives the legitimation of its power from a specific historical order. Indeed, Foucault undermined philosophical notions of unchanging essences in history, proposing a horizon without ontological origin. In his work, notions of madness, social discipline, truth and sexuality, are seen as discontinuously constructed along the course of history, taking different meanings according to different “epistemes”. This is to say that sexuality, discipline or madness do not have a universal origin, but are discourses produced historically through the institution of power which is intrinsically linked to knowledge (see for instance Foucault, 1977 and 1981a).

These concepts shape the individual subject, exposing it to disciplinary norms and standards that are historically produced. This process always creates a boundary between what is considered right according to the current body of knowledge and what is considered abnormal because it challenges the dominant truth. Similarly, Fanon saw colonial domination as both an epistemological and ontological system as well as a form of structural violence that was much broader than economic exploitation (Fanon, 1991[1961]). It was civilisational, and racial in its content. Its characteristic forms of violence have a peculiar temporal logic reflected in its characteristic frameworks of thought, that is exactly the discursive construction of the colonial mind (see Persaud, 1997).

Fanon, as other postcolonial/decolonial theorists, sees in colonialism the ontological and epistemological essence of Modernity, whereas according to Foucault there is no ontology as such, and therefore colonialism represents only an epistemic factor.

However, both authors had at the heart of their interest the goal of breaking the supposed ontological supremacy of Western culture and its episteme by showing the contingency of such truths and dismantling the universal validity of Western culture and epistemology. We might argue that it is actually the very refusal of ontological origins of discourses that opens up spaces with the possibility of disrupting any colonality in European practices.

What has been discussed previously regarding the Foucauldian/Fanon divergences and similarities can resonate in the more general debate about the use and interpretation of the work of Foucault in the field of postcolonial studies and the specific use in this thesis. Many scholars have been reflecting on the differences, limitations, and advantages that post/decolonial approach and Foucauldian lens may bring reciprocity to the others (see among others Galceran Huguet, 2012; Legg, 2007 and 2018; Mezzadra, Reid and Sammadar, 2013; Nichols, 2010; Willaert, 2013).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, decolonial authors use it to direct a polemical critique to postcolonial theory, accused to be so grounded on poststructuralist studies to become a project that only remains internal to European academy. At the same time, several scholars within the decolonial approach framework are using Foucauldian concepts and one of the main decolonial thinkers, Santiago Castro-Gómez, is in fact

promoting the use of Foucauldian genealogy as a method in decolonial researches. According to Castro-Gómez, decolonial thinking implements processes of reformulation of the colonial history in a similar way as Foucault's genealogical method does on a European frame (Castro-Gómez, 2010). Hence, if the founding fathers of postcolonialism have been deeply influenced by Foucault and the decolonial scholars cannot avoid the confrontation with the French author, the use of a specific Foucauldian methodology in a post/decolonial theory should not be problematic. Yet, some tensions remain that must be clarified. As Staeger (2016) puts it, a Foucauldian decolonial critique might raise some problematic, as a marriage between a decolonial approach and a European methodological paradigm could seem cynical for several aspects.

For this thesis, the main interest remains in the notion of discourse, driven by a Foucauldian conceptualisation. In particular, the divergences between a notion of colonial discourses that emphasise continuities and a notion of Foucault's poststructuralism emphasises discontinuities and disjunctions in systems of meaning and regimes of truth across time.

Foucauldian discourse theory allows for an analysis of history through focusing on a series of changes and ruptures. However, in this dynamic, each subsequent shift from a rupture to another logically entails legacies from the past. Along with discontinuity, there is of course continuity, otherwise, there would be no historical need for his concept of genealogy or, more drastically, no history at all.

The specific methodology that is used in this research, the Discourse-Historical Approach, perfectly serves the scope of working both on continuities and discontinuities, and provides clear guidance on this by interrogating what aspects of the discourse change over time and what aspects do not, and making us reflect on the reasons for both continuities and discontinuities.

Looking at these discursive ruptures helps to identify fragments of history that are left behind by the social and political powers. Therefore, by analyzing the legacy of the colonial discourse in the present EU peacebuilding policymaking, this research recognises that it was from colonialism that a certain discourse of civilisation that is

co-constitutive of the European identity originated. This research fully insists on this idea.

Nevertheless, along with the awareness of continuity from colonialism - that decolonial authors recognise as coloniality - a Foucauldian study of discourse allows recognising the changes and fractures that occurred over the course of history, where power-knowledge relations have mutated, and the very subject of power has changed (see in this context the rupture between the Belgian coloniser and the 'European take over' or the different phases in history of bringing peace to Africa, both analysed in Chapter Four).

This is also connected to a second point that I would like to stress. One of the most common criticisms that decolonial theorists address to Foucault is the one regarding the supposed inability to escape from the trap of subjectivity. Indeed, as Mezzadra, Reid and Sammadar (2013) assert, Foucault's thought has been the target of criticism for apparently describing an increasingly limited horizon of political possibilities and provoking disenchantment with the political itself, showing an apparent inability to address change.

Nurturing a certain scepticism towards these arguments, I would argue that the use of the concept of discourse inspired by Foucault is, on the contrary, a place where one can elaborate on the history of the modern post-colonial world and imagine alternatives; in a discursive space created to be able to see discontinuities and ruptures over the course of the history. As explained briefly before in this paragraph, the concept of discourse as reproductive of reality and the idea of breaking the ontological supremacy of Western culture are probably the most influential factors that postcolonial theory drawn on by Foucault. Foucault, therefore, is explicitly mobilised in this thesis as a possibility of questioning about discourse and related questions about the production of knowledge within colonial power.

In the worlds of Mezzadra, Reid and Sammadar (2013), in the introduction of their book:

This book [...] is dedicated to exploring how we can use his [Foucault's] ideas to recover the vital capacity to think and act politically in a time when fundamentally human capacities to think, to know and to act

purposely in the world are being pathologized as expressions of the hubris and ‘underdevelopment’ of postcolonial peoples.

Therefore, the use of discourse in this research does not contradict the call made by postcolonial and decolonial theorist to think otherwise, explored in the previous chapter. Foucauldian discourse theory, though often wrongly accused of so doing, does not deny the subject, and its space for change. In a nutshell, Foucault inscribes the subject in a complex net of power-knowledge discourses, but this does not prevent the subject to put power relation in practice and fabricates it is our life.

In this sense, the importance of using discourse as an interpretative tool lies in what Koopman describes as “responsive reconstruction” (2013: 21). To quote Foucault, the task is “to construct another political thought, another political imagination, and teach anew the vision of a future” (2005: 185). This task does not seem very dissimilar to the goal of ‘thinking otherwise’ of the decolonial scholarship.

This introductory explanation dedicated to the theorisation of the concept of colonial discourse is pivotal for the understanding of the empirical analysis of the thesis, as this notion of discourse is the leitmotif of the analysis of EU peacebuilding policymaking actions, speeches and documents. In the following, I turn my attention to some of the defining features of colonial discourse that are significant elements to take into account in the analysis: discursive strategies, ambivalence and hybridity.

2.1 Discursive Strategies

Discursive strategies are the linguistic and practical tools used to construct a discourse. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault identified a set of strategies by which a discourse constitutes its object (Foucault, 1980) by normalizing certain subjectivities and excluding others. According to Smythe (2006), strategies of normalisation and exclusion may be recognized as comparing, ranking, classifying, hierarchizing and dividing.

Regarding colonial discourse, a discursive strategy or a “strategy of coloniality” could be understood as a way of spreading a colonialist ideology, by reproducing the basic

structure of colonial discourse. Such a strategy is linguistically produced by a network of interconnected statements, ideas, beliefs, and subject-positions that are institutionally grounded and find expression in different colonial practices.

According to postcolonial and decolonial scholars, this basic structure of discourse that is reproduced in discursive strategy lies in a dualist division of the world. Indeed, this is created by the main divide that allows the division of the world into a “civilised” colonial identity and an “uncivilised” colonized other.

Stuart Hall argues that at the same time that the colonial moment produces a coercive linking together of different histories within the same temporality, it also constructs the main divide between these histories, which we could synthetically consider as the birth of the notions of global “North-West” and “South-East” (1996).

According to Ifversen (1997), civilisation became the structuring principle of world history, both its driving force and its end result of this North/West and South/East divide.

This is the awareness that Frantz Fanon’s work powerfully evoked – the force with which colonialism was structured through the marking of difference. He argued that the violent encounter between coloniser and colonised constituted these categories of people as so unlike each other that they appeared to become “two different species”:

This world divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality, and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities.

(Fanon, 1963:39-40).

Colonial cultures depended on a series of discursive oppositions constructed between the self and the other. The self is identified as the coloniser, white, Christian and civilised, whereas the other is identified as the colonised, black, heathen and savage. The self-image was used to construct Indigenous peoples of empire through their alleged otherness to the “European” self. In other words, they were ordered in a hierarchical order of similarity to the European self.

Race, culture and language – amongst other markers – were used to codify conformity and disconformity from a European “norm” (see also Cleall, 2012).

Partha Chatterjee has described how the “rule of colonial difference”, that is, how “representing the ‘other’ as inferior and radically different, and hence incorrigibly inferior”, was part of the “strategy for the deployment of the modern forms of disciplinary power” (Chatterjee: 1993).

It was indeed through these and other differences that imperialism was justified and rationalised, as the basic assumption behind the difference is that the colonised were not able to govern themselves so that colonisers came to help them, as they are by nature destined to rule or even morally obliged to do so as a responsibility.

As John Hobson notes (2007: 94), drawing on Said:

“Eurocentrism or Orientalism is a discourse that was invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by European thinkers as they went about constructing European identity [where] Western man was elevated to the permanent ‘proactive subject’ of global politics/economics – past, present and future – standing at the centre of all things. Conversely, Eastern ‘man’ was relegated to the peripheral status of global politics’ ‘passive object’, languishing on the Other side of an imaginary civilisational frontier, stripped of history and dignity. In this Eurocentric imaginary, then, the line of civilisational apartheid separates the Western heart of light from the Eastern heart of Darkness”.

The inherent points around which the differences are organised are race and gender: all the positive characteristics are manifest in the “white man”, providing the foundation on a collective level of the “master race” (see Ziai, 2015). The white man thus constitutes what Laclau and Mouffe call the “nodal point” or “dominant signifier” of a discourse: the centre which serves as a point of reference for the differences according to which identities are being constructed (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 112) or the benchmark according to which all other identities are found to be deficient (Ziai, 2015).

The difference between Self and Other is simultaneously being denied and affirmed, in an interplay of universalism and essentialism. It is being denied because, in the ethnocentric evaluation, the indigenous appears merely as an incomplete image of one's own norm of human existence, which is to be educated and assimilated according to this norm. A salient example of this tension between the universal and the essential in the present day is argued to be common in liberal cosmopolitan thought that claims for the universality of human rights at the same time as it derives only from particular Western origins (Bhambra & Shilliam, 2009: 3).

The strange and unknown Other appears as a deficient version of the Self (Ziai, 2015). Yet, despite the civilisation transfer, the colonised will always remain inferior within the order of discourse and are unable to fully reach the level of civilisation of the white man: the power of differences endlessly remakes itself. Postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha refers to this as colonial mimicry: “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, *as a subject of difference, that is almost the same, but not quite*” (1994: 122, emphasis in the original) and in Chatterjee's analysis, Indians and by extension other peoples of empire, would never “catch up”; the “normalizing mission” was “destined” never to be fulfilled because “the premise of power was preserving itself”.

Difference is made in multiple ways simultaneously. Difference can be negotiated through the institutional structures of the state, internalized in the psyches of individuals and of communities, performed in social relations, embodied in experiences, relived through memory, articulated through language and “seen” on the body. Said describes this process of constructing the Other through opposition as “Orientalism”: a way of knowing the other by constructing the other in a relation of domination to a unilateral discourse, whereas Spivak refers to this as “worlding”.

As Stuart Hall argues, relations of difference are usually inflected by power dynamics which privilege certain positions and attempt to “fix” this privileged positioning (Hall, 1996).

One powerful example of discursive strategies is the metaphor of Africa as the Dark Continent, that allowed the control and domination of the African land. The historical

persistence and the ideological power of this metaphor were widely studied (see Brantlinger, 1985; Cleall, 2012; Jarosz, 1992; London, 1989 among others).

This metaphor of darkness is connected with the idea of primordial chaos and in connection with the European idea of pacifying the dark continent and placating its irrational violence. As Patrick Brantlinger (1985) powerfully demonstrated, images of Africa “darkened” over the nineteenth century and Africa was increasingly associated with dystopian savagery. The myth of the dark continent was so pervasive to the extent that by the end of the nineteenth century, politicians, travel writers, explorers, missionaries and novelists represented Africa as a part of the world possessed by demonic darkness or barbarism, represented above all by slavery, human sacrifice, and cannibalism. And of course, it was a European duty to exorcise such darkness. According to Mbembe (2001:3):

“Africa is portrayed as a vast dark cave where every benchmark and distinction come together in total confusion, and the rifts of tragic and unhappy human history stand revealed; a mixture of the half-created and the incomplete, strange signs, compulsive movements, in short a bottomless abyss where everything is noise, yawning gaps and primordial chaos.”

It was not simply that Africa was unknown, disordered or chaotic, but the darkness was threatening, brutal and carnal; a turbulent and threatening, far from passive, colonial space (Cleall, 2012: 123-141) This was the space for Europeans to intervene. Solving the chaos and pacifying the country. Bringing peace to the Dark Continent was the European mission to civilise and moralise the Africans.

2.2. Ambivalence and Hybridity in Colonial Discourse

Two fundamental features of colonial discourses are ambivalence and hybridity that render the discursive strategies stronger and legitimate. These concepts are herein explained and frequently mobilised in the empirical analysis.

For both Spivak and Bhabha, Orientalist discourses are not monolithic but ruptured and hybrid. For Bhabha, hybridity describes the way in which colonial/imperial

discourse is inherently unstable, “split” in its enunciation, so that “in the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid” (Bhabha 1994: 33). Bhabha illustrates this instability through an analysis of the “colonial stereotype”, that according to him is the main discursive strategy used for the deployment of imperial authority (ibid).

Bhabha shows how these stereotypes — the “noble savage”, the “wily oriental”— are meant to be accepted as “fixed” and “natural”; yet they are endlessly and anxiously repeated and reconfirmed by the coloniser. Often the stereotypes are also contradictory: the colonial subject, Bhabha writes, is “savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar” (1994:82)

Such repetition, such as “double inscription”, for Bhabha, betray the slipperiness and ambivalence of colonial discourse and authority (ibid: 108). If such ambivalence in discourses is considered spaces for enabling subversion (Bhabha, 1994), it is also functional to the very deployment of colonial power. According to Aničić (2015), the ambivalent effect of stereotype is that instead of securing the binary order of subjection, it proliferates images that terrorize the coloniser.

The same logic applies to the colonial identity. The civilised can employ barbaric practices while at the same time affirming the construction of the perpetrator’s identity as civilised and that of the victims as uncivilised. Such ambivalences are, however, designated as entirely rational. The insidiousness of these discourses of difference is that they have been shown as natural, in a normalising process that makes the stereotypes look resiliently fixed, even in their ambivalence.

The work of a postcolonial scholar is to try and unravel these threads, to disentangle some of the complex processes by which difference was created, maintained and naturalised. Interrogating how difference operates discursively, postcolonial and decolonial theorists are concerned with investigating the processes through which difference was made, remade, ruptured and reaffirmed, and how its constitution continued on time.

This is the work done in this thesis, where the legacies of colonial thinking in EU officials' policymaking are explored as a discourse where individual statements about encounters with "the locals" for example, worked together as an internally coherent "regime of truth", constructing the local as the infantile, childish, lazy "other". Following Bhabha, the research takes colonial discourses to be forked, ambivalent and endlessly subject to renegotiation. In the empirical analysis, the study reflects on what the ruptures, contradictions and ambiguities that characterise colonial discourses meant for the making of difference, and by analysing the master and the subject as "mutually constituted" identities, where the former coloniser's (EU) identity is at stake in processes of colonisation as well as those of the former colonized (see Catherine Hall, 2002).

If post-colonial time is the time after colonialism, and colonialism is defined in terms of the binary division between the colonisers and the colonised, Stuart Hall is rightly asking why is post-colonial time also a time of "difference"? What sort of "difference" is this and what are its implications for the forms of politics and for subject formation in this late-modern moment (Hall, 1996: 295)? The same reflection drives this thesis. To what extent can we indeed claim that the same colonial discourse based on differences is still alive in the present and how can we recognize them?

2.3. The Meaningful Absence

Any colonial discourse, travelling through historical epistemes, is a particular bundle of silences. Indeed, as we said, the process of constructing the colonial discourse is one of exclusion and marginalisation of certain truths, to the benefit of the dominant one. Colonial discourse is a process in which a dominant story was able to hide a marginalised other history through planned and accidental colonial strategies. Postcolonial scholars apply the theoretical lens of silence to show how certain discourses created a regime of absolutism that ignores the subaltern experiences (see Bhabra & Shilliam, 2009).

Santos (2001,2007), refers in this sense to the "sociology of absences": the general silences around particular experiences and the way in which these silences are actively created through particular processes. Such research enables an analysis of what is

marginalised, suppressed, and of what has not been allowed to exist in the first place, by focussing on the processes that obstruct connections between different struggles, and knowledge to demonstrate how the “incompleteness” and “inadequacy” of counter-hegemonic forms are produced.

Santos suggests that hegemonic globalisation overlays an understanding of the global upon the world that denies and erases local differences. In contrast, “the universal and the global constructed by the sociology of absences, far from denying or eliminating the particular and the local, rather encourage them to envision what is beyond them” (2001: 191).

In other words, the sociology of absences argues for understandings of the global to be created through the non-linear accretion of local engagements.

In poststructuralist accounts, Foucault suggested that silence is not only constitutive of overall discourse itself but is an agent of power in its own right (Foucault, 1976). Indeed, Foucault puts forward the notion that discourse is best conceived as a series of discontinuous segments: multiplicity of structures and discursive elements. One of the discursive elements is silence, which Foucault identifies as being also an agent of power. We can see that: “The makeup of discourse has to be pieced together, with things both said and unsaid, with required and with forbidden speech” (Foucault, 1976: 133).

In this way, Foucault is recognizing that discourse may be made up of silence and of things that remain unsaid. Silence can, therefore, be illustrative of power being articulated, or as a means of resistance (see Ward & Winstanley, 2003). According to Trouillot (2015: 26), silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources), the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives), the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives), and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance).

The strategies deployed in this research reflect this variation and try to treat different kinds of silences. Firstly, the study focuses on how the colonial history within the EU is silenced by the very creator of European history in the moment of fact creation, and it is interested in proposing a different history (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).

Then the study also reflects on the silences in the moment of “assembly” (looking at the European Archives and memories). Here, the focus is on the narratives about that history (within EU officials) and at their reflection about such narratives. Finally, the study is also concerned about the moment of fact retrieval, on how the narrative about history is passed on in the present, and this is studied in the thesis by using discourse analysis to make certain aspects of historical production and reproduction emerge to best expose a certain continuation of power along with the history.

3. A Postcolonial Methodology?

As pointed out, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives look at colonial continuities embedded not just in the epistemic foundations of the different thematic concerns, but also in epistemological practices as consecrated in methods and methodologies.

A decolonising approach to the research implies, therefore, critical engagement in the deconstruction of existing methodologies and methods that reproduce the “coloniality of knowledge” and reconstruction and/or reinvention of research practice. Fittingly, Tuhiwai Smith considers that decolonisation is hence concerned with having “a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform research practices” (2012:1).

In academia, various traditions attempt to offer epistemological lenses that allow for a more pluralist and contextualized understanding of the social world. Feminist, anti-racist and decolonial scholars have focused on developing methods for power sensitive research in order to deconstruct what still appears to be a hegemonic and positivist research paradigm by putting forward concepts such as positional reflexivity, standpoint feminism, situated knowledge or critical whiteness (see for example Smith, 2012).

While these developments may point to a desirable change to heterodox and critical approaches, we can still observe that the “master’s tools” are the most commonly employed and that finding a new methodological engagement appears to be a necessary but difficult process.

Methodological reflections of on-going entanglements regarding colonial power/knowledge complexes – like the one initiated in the previous section about colonial discourse – generally lead to the reflection of decolonial research practice and the application of decolonial methods. In this sense, an important point of reference for the decolonising approach to Social Science research has been the International

Conference “Beyond the Master’s Tools¹⁰” that reflected on postcolonial and decolonial approaches to research methodology and methods in the social sciences.

However, such studies are much more focused on the promotion of marginalised accounts from a decolonial standpoints, rather than to the analysis of the master history and its deconstruction, as is the case with this thesis.

In particular, because the object of the thesis is the study of the “European” self and not of the subjective colonised other, the thesis focuses more on conceptualising and finding gaps and silences in discourse analysis, rather than the ethnomethodological methods of decolonial research and counter-narratives. The claim in the thesis to being postcolonial relates to the study of colonial continuity within the “master” subject, rather than finding alternative narratives to it. Consequently, the methodology of research varies extensively from the more recent postcolonial tools (i.e. auto-ethnography or action-research) that are starting to be used.

If we take the Steinmetz (2013) argument that “postcolonial studies” is identified above all with the claim that colonialism has been as much about Europe and Europeans as about the colonized, this thesis is concerned more in analysing the colonial legacies in the first of the two poles. In his preface to Fanon’s *Les Damnés de la Terre*, Sartre writes, “We too, the people of Europe are being decolonised, let us look at ourselves if we dare and see what it makes of us”. In a similar vein, Cesaire in *Discourse on Colonialism* admits:

First we must study how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism;[...] and that at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated, all these punitive expeditions that have been tolerated, all these prisoners who have been tied up and ‘interrogated’, all these patriots who have been tortured, at

¹⁰ International Conference “Beyond the Master’s Tools: Post- and Decolonial approaches to research methodology and methods in the social sciences”. Organised at the University of Kassel the 14-15 January 2016.

the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward savagery.

(Cesaire, 1972: 35)

Thus, postcolonial theorists reveal how colonisers' culture has been shaped through the colonial encounter, and how colonisation impacted the metropolitan countries as much as the colonised countries.

Framed in this sense, the thesis strives to rethink how to decolonise the epistemological conceptualisation and the research design. However, despite a plethora of studies on Colonial Discourses, it is possible to identify a certain gap in terms of how to methodologically uncover such discourses. Whilst Discourse Theory is very much developed, it has been challenging to find within the literature an answer to questions such as: which methodology can be applied to the analysis of colonial discourses? How to claim that discourse is colonial? How to compare colonial discourses over time? How to operationalize a diachronic and synchronic comparison of discourses?

In finding an answer to such questions, and a practical methodology of the analysis of colonial discourse, the thesis aims at contributing to the existing literature by promoting an innovative combination of colonial discourse theory (as exposed in the previous sections) with the Critical Discourse Analysis - Historical Approach (DHA).

In the following paragraphs, this specific methodological approach is explained and operationalised through using the DHA and enriching it with Colonial Discourse Theory in order to make it more specific to the need for this research.

3.1. Encountering Discourse-Historical Approach

The choice of relying on discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) is intended in order to find a more structured methodological tool to Colonial Discourse Theory, based on the fact that DHA shares the same understanding of discourse and episteme as the postcolonial and decolonial approach. Indeed, the DHA, as part of Critical Discourse Analysis, adheres to the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory informed by poststructuralist accounts.¹¹

Discourse analysis – “the analysis of the domain of statements...of texts, and of utterances” (Fairclough 2003: 123) – is a central method in the assessment of how norms are discursively embedded and disseminated, and how arising discourses convey the “rules” which “govern” and legitimise Europe’s engagement with former colonies.

Analysis of the peacebuilding discourses enables us to consider how certain norms/truths have been disseminated as discursive entities, how they have been historically reconfigured in response to EU actors’ shifting interests (Fairclough 2003: 123). Notably, it allows us to analyse speeches, actions, documents on EU peacebuilding policymaking to understand whether there are colonial legacies. In particular, this means revealing continuities with the historical European colonial narratives on pacifying the Congo, and more generally it entails understanding if the body of statements analysed contains the elements of colonial discourse. Peacebuilding, in this way, can be assessed in relation to how it “encodes” the colonial legacy in the EU-Africa relationship.

The attention to the role of discourse in the maintenance of power asymmetries within North-South relations has a long history. For example, Escobar (1988: 439) uses the “Foucauldian toolbox” to critique how “development” discourses have brought “problems” into being by constructing certain social issues as falling within the legitimate purview of donors. Notably, he examines donor countries’ “discovery” of malnutrition in the so-called Third World and their subsequent exercise of power over those deemed in need of Western assistance (1988: 439).

¹¹ For more information about DHA see Aydın-Düzgit, 2013; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2001; Wodak and Boukala, in press; Wodak and Meyer, 2009.

Kothari (2001: 142) also critiques the discourse of “participatory development” and, with reference to Foucault, considers participatory narratives as a means of entrenching donors’ control over the lives of “the poor”.

More recently, other important works have been published on this topic. Chandler (2010) looks at the interconnected and overlapping policy paradigms through which Western engagement and intervention in the colonial and post-colonial state have been negotiated and reflected. Langan (2016) adopted a critical discourse analysis of the statements and language of the EU–Africa “partnership” and examined how “pro-poor” discourses have been used to encode legitimating moralities. Finally, Ziai (2013; 2015) discusses and puts in question the discourse of “development” and its Eurocentric, depoliticising, and authoritarian implications.

The above-mentioned studies are clearly very important points of reference for my study. Admittedly provocative and constructive in their outcome, they, however, might not be so helpful in providing a satisfactory explanation of the specific methodology used here.

Acknowledging past use of discourse analysis in the assessment of power asymmetries between the developed “North” and the developing “South”, but also witnessing a certain lack of reflection on the methodology, this work adopts, therefore, a DHA lens to look at the historical continuities and discontinuities of a coloniality of power in EU relations with Africa in the peacebuilding sphere.

The following paragraph is dedicated to the operationalisation of colonial discourse within a DHA framework, which will be the main reference for the analysis of the study’s data.

3.2. Operationalising Colonial Discourse

The specific feature of DHA is that it analyses the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change or continuity (Wodak et al., 1990; Wodak et al., 1994). In this sense, the DHA allows us to look at the historical manifestation of discourses, and therefore, it seems the more adequate choice within the spectrum of critical discourse analysis given the central research question of this thesis.

With regard to the way some colonial legacies remained constant yet have been discursively rearticulated, Foucault considered the genealogy of history to be composed by a process of discontinuities rather than the continuous accumulation of discourses. However, he also explained that the evolution of discourses does not necessarily jettison former concepts or objects of control (2009 [1969]: 191). Instead, forms of continuity can be discerned as certain concepts (or norms) remain identical yet find “different systems of dispersion”.

As the thesis illustrates, this understanding of transformation is important to consider with regards to how colonial discourses have remained as fixed components of the relationship of Europe and Africa, yet have nevertheless found different modes of discursive dispersion in its historical evolution.

According to Reisigl & Wodak (2001), the operationalisation of a discourse entails a social critique which embraces at least three interconnected aspects that we touched upon previously in this chapter:

1. A text or discourse immanent critique that aims at discovering inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures. This, in the postcolonial case, means the uncovering of the ambivalent colonial discourses.
2. DHA is concerned with the demystifying exposure of the manifest or latent possibly persuasive or “manipulative” character of discursive practices, understanding communicative or interactional structures of a discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances. This, at the Postcolonial level, means uncovering the legacy itself of colonial discourse and its silencing framework.

3. Prognostic critique contributes to the transformation and improvement of communication as well as guidelines for avoiding discriminatory discourses. This relies on the forward-looking aspect of postcolonial critique, that once the western-centric ontology is broken, tends to recreate a postcolonial view.

As a process of analysis, Wodak and Meyer breaks down the DHA in three different steps:

1. Analysing the linguistic manifestations of prejudice in the discourse, embedded in the linguistic and social context (for example, newspapers, interviews or policy papers on EU peacebuilding)
2. Confronting the latter texts with other facts and context phenomena (read about the EU peacebuilding factsheets; information about development and aid programs, etc.)
3. Contrast the text with historical knowledge. In other words, do not rely on the “meta-data” alone but compare it with the historical facts carrying the same discourse. (This is the crucial part in which a present linguistic manifestation of EU peacebuilding is compared with the historical colonial discourse to comprehend if they have the same “prejudice” in common or, more specifically, if the present linguistic manifestation carries the features of a colonial discourse).

While applying the three steps of this process of analysis described above (analysis of the linguistic manifestation, triangulation of the source and contrast of the source with the historical knowledge), Wodak (2001) suggests a list of main questions that are a useful guide in the analysis of the discourses. While analysing interviews, texts, utterances, actions, such questions have always been the point of reference.

The list of Wodak’s suggested questions is provided in the following, alongside examples from the study.

- *What actors participate in the specific discourse?* To answer to this question in the context of the thesis, it is important to consider if the actors that constructed the colonial discourse are the same, or if there has been a change

over the course of history. In this sense, it is important to undertake a reflection on the EU as a colonial subject, which will be the aim of the next chapter. But more specifically, when looking at every linguistic manifestation about EU peacebuilding policymaking it is asked: Who is speaking? What is the background of this officer/practitioner/peacebuilder? What is its relationship with the recipient of peacebuilding aid? Is she/he in a position of power?

- *What validity claims of truth and normative rightness are explicitly made or presupposed in the discourse in question?* To answer to this question, the analysis looks at the data with the objective of scrutinising if they are carrying specific normative assumptions about the EU's role, or if they reproduce any racial prejudice typical of colonial discourses (if they use any colonial strategy or if they have the features of a colonial discourse).
- *What contradictions are constructed in the discourse?* This question looks at the contradiction in a linguistic manifestation that possibly contains prejudices that need to be brought to the surface. In the thesis, it means looking at the ambiguity of the colonial discourse and to its hybridity, to reveal such inconsistencies that form part of the way the colonial order of discourse is perpetuated.
- *What aspects of the discourse change over time? What are the reasons for the change? What aspects continue over time?* This is a crucial question for the research, in which in comparing present peacebuilding manifestations with historical sources, it is possible to notice if there is a continuity with the colonial discourse or not. And within the colonial discourse itself, what are the features that remain similar in today's discourses on peacebuilding and what are those that changed?
- *What other discourses does the discourse intersect with and relate to?* This final question is possibly the most complex, as it requires the disentanglement of colonial discourse with other sets of discourses. It might emerge in the case of the thesis if coming across intersectionality, where a certain statement analysed not only reproduces a colonial discourse, but also a patriarchal one.

By looking at those questions, it is apparent that a salient point to solve is the operationalisation of the concept of colonial discourses itself. In response to this

question, the research draws from the analysis of Ziai (2015: 33), which recognises three major orders of discourses that identify the colonial discourse.

He considers such features to still be present in the discourse of development; as such the basic features of the colonial discourse are not associated solely with the historical colonial time. Rather, they might offer a useful “checklist” in the identification of the presence of a “coloniality of knowledge” in the present time. These three orders of discourse are the basic structure of the discourse, the philosophy of history and social technology (Ziai, 2015: 33).

1. The basic structure of discourse refers to the basic structure of the colonial discourse, that divides the world into two opposites: a progressive, superior part and a backward, inferior part.
2. The philosophy of history consists in a concept taken over from 19th century evolutionism in social science, and that is the idea of a universal scale of *development* for the whole of humanity, along which the industrialised countries of Western Europe and North America are more progressed than the non-Western countries. Such an argument sets up non-Western cultures today as equivalent to pre-modern Western cultures and points to the West as the lead society showing the rest of the world the way forward.
3. The social technology, i.e. the intent to shape the societies in the South (and the people therein) according to rational criteria.

4. Research Methods

After having provided the theoretical framework of the research, and having translated it in a coherent methodology, the remaining part of the chapter is committed to the explanation of how this methodology is put in practice in the research methods. The following paragraphs intend to explore the role of the researcher and her positionality, as well as to delimit the subject of the research area, and finally to provide a description of the research methods used to gather the data.

4.1.Positionality

In this century, a multiplicity of approaches and theories have argued that the neutrality of the theorizer can no longer be sustained (see Alcoff, 1991 and Flyvbjerg, 2001 among others). Critical theory, psychoanalytic theory, post-structuralism, feminist and anti-colonialist theories have all concurred on this point.

Thus, decolonial and postcolonial research ethics demands that we step away from any pretence of neutrality, objectivity, and impartiality that have long been prescribed by more positivist research methods – but doing so in a way that we can still try to reach an intersubjective understanding of the international sphere.

McDowall and Ramos (2018) consider possible tensions that might arise between canonical standards of academic writing and the decolonial call to de-link from the epistemological assumption of a neutral and detached observational location from which the world is interpreted. These authors, in particular, discuss how the PhD for decolonial scholars can be considered a “writing Borderland”, an ambiguous space in-between writing decolonially and respecting academic standards.

The positionality or location of the speaker and the discursive context are important as much as what is said. As a researcher, I, therefore, come with a location – a social location and identity – that is impossible to transcend and that needs to be brought to

the forefront as a way in which I am historically and socially linked with the areas of study (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992)¹².

As a white privileged woman, coming from Europe, living in Brussels and working at the Institute for European Studies, my view is clearly partial. My whiteness, my historical background and my institutional privilege, all place me in a problematic power relation that needs to be confronted. I have therefore tried, throughout my doctoral research, to confront my position in an active and constant self-reflexive process, that acknowledges the particular positionality of my role within the subject of inquiry.

Feminist and postcolonial authors gave a clear articulation of the risk of speaking for others and the risk of "epistemicide" in an occidental or Eurocentric research agenda. In the famous essay "Can the subaltern speak?" (1988), Spivak considers the limits of the act of giving voices to the oppressed as a very "*savoir*" attitude that recalls the colonisers' behaviour. Spivak sees it as a form of epistemic violence that could lead the researchers to orientalise the subalterns, being unknowingly complicit in the task of imperialism. Indeed, she rhetorically wonders: "Is 'postcolonialism' a specifically first-world, male, privileged, academic discourse that classifies and surveys the East in the same measure as the actual modes of colonial dominance it seeks to dismantle?" (Spivak, 1988:285).

This is one of the reasons that made me decide to only aim at portraying the dominant reality of donors in peacebuilding policies – namely the EU's viewpoint – and not to pursue ethnographic work in the field. This reflection does not intend dismissing ethnographic works "in the field" *per se*, or to claim that we can only study "people like us". On the contrary, it acknowledges the extreme relevance of such kind of works, exactly in consideration of the challenges they provide to researchers' positionality. In the frame of my research, and in consideration of my experiences and interests, I believed that my contribution would have been much more valuable in the analysis of the EU. Therefore, the thesis orients itself towards the study of the

¹² This point is often criticised by positivist scholars to the extent that the conclusions drawn from the analysis cannot be verified, falsified or tested, thus arguing for a the lack of external validity and reliability of a the social sciences. For an exhaustive reflection on this topic see Flyvbjerg, 2001 and Jackson, 2010.

dominant, “master” accounts, rather than the counter-narratives of subjugated accounts.

4.2. The Subject of Analysis

As already clarified, the study cannot claim to be postcolonial in the sense of reconstructing the voice of those marginalised and oppressed by colonialism and neocolonialism, but it is interested in finding elements of colonial discourse that have survived in contemporary EU peacebuilding discourse. In so doing, the subject of the analysis is the EU as a complex actor, in its historical development.

Even though I am conscious of the EU’s fragmented condition, different powers of member states and their interplay, and being aware that there is even a dispute regarding whether the EU represents a meaningful unit of analysis at all and moreover in the international domain (see Carta & Morin, 2014), the thesis considers the EU as an unified, single entity of analysis.

Some EU scholars see in this a challenge and an incentive to assume an actor-centred approach (White, 1999). By focusing on actors, processes, issues, instruments context and actions related to the EU foreign policy system, it becomes possible to conceptualise European Foreign Policy as a political system, with inputs from national actors and their preferences (in conjunction with domestic politics) and from external sources; and with the outputs of foreign policy actions and positions (Ginsberg 2001:39). Despite its challenging nature, not dissimilar from nation-states, the EU can be considered a “collective actor”, which expresses a pluralistic identity, and therefore it is possible to study it as a meaningful unit of analysis.

Moreover, we will see in the next chapter that it is the particular postcolonial perspective that allows me to make this claim even stronger. According to the postcolonial and decolonial theories, Europe is a meaningful unit of analysis, whose identity is firmly marked in the colonial experience. It is, therefore, the colonial experience and the assumptions of normative superiority that have been brought at the European level, that constitutes Europe itself.

Almost twenty years ago, Diez (1999) was the first to apply discourse analysis to the study of the EU. In his research, he argued for the importance of adding the discursive dimension to the predominant focus on ideas, interests and institutions in the study of EU integration. Since then, numerous authors directed their inquiry to the discursive analysis of the EU, applying different methods of the discourse analysis “toolbox” (see for example Browning, 2003; Drulák, 2006; Wodak, 2000; Erjavec, 2009 and Teti, 2012). Regarding the specific field of EU foreign policy, it is worth naming the studies of Carta and Morin (2014), Diez (2014), Baker-Beall (2014), Larsen (2004), and Rogers (2009), among others.

The research contributes to this numerous group of inquiries, with the major innovation of bringing the element of colonial discourse to the core of the investigation, and therefore to provide the bridge between EU Studies and postcolonial and decolonial theories, as already discussed in the previous chapter.

4.3 The Sources

DHA specifically relies on intertextuality – the relationship among different texts – and interdiscursivity – the connection among discourses – to establish a dynamic relationship between utterances and the context in which they are produced. In this sense, DHA explicitly relies on triangulation of different sources, data, methods, theories and background information to grasp the context in which discourses are embedded. This also allows the researcher to minimize the risk of being biased and to “cherry pick” (see Wodak, 2001). Thus, one of the most salient, distinguishing features of DHA is its endeavour to work with different approaches, multi-methodologically and on the basis of a variety of empirical data as well as background information (see for example Wodak et al., 1998 and Wodak et al., 1999).

In investigating historical, organisational and political topics and texts, this approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political texts in which discursive “events” are embedded. With this objective, the research relies on a variety of different methods: interviews, participant-observation, archival research and document

analysis. The empirical basis of this thesis is composed of 62 interviews conducted from April to December 2015 and from March to August 2016.¹³

The targets of my interviews were EU Officials involved at different levels in the EU peacebuilding policies in DRC. It included personnel from the European External Action Service (EEAS), from DG DEVCO (Development and Cooperation) of the European Commission and from ECHO (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations). Regarding the EEAS, I was able to talk with the unit responsible for Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Mediation, the Unit for Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation, Democracy and Electoral Observation, and Development Cooperation Coordination. I also interviewed the Head of Division and the staff from Pan-African affairs, as well as the personnel from the Central Africa Division.

It is important to mention the interviews done in the Foreign Policy Instruments Service, especially with the unit for the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace. Regarding the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, I interviewed civilian and military personnel responsible for CSDP missions in DRC, which were appointed in the unit for Crisis Management and Planning and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, as well as former personnel of the former unit for Crisis Response and Operation Coordination. Within the DEVCO, I interviewed personnel from the Africa-EU Partnership and Peace Facility Unit as well as the Department of Geographical Coordination for Central Africa. It has been also important to talk with Officers of EU Delegation in Kinshasa.

The interview process has been particularly torturous and challenging. From the very beginning of the empirical research, I realized that I was touching a very uncomfortable topic for my interviewees. I started sending interview requests by May 2015 to all EU Civil Servants dealing with peace-related issues and/or DRC in EEAS, the European Commission DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) and ECHO,

¹³ The interviews performed were all semi-structured, of the average length of one hour. I used an interview questionnaire as a guide, which was based with inquiries linked to my general research question and sub-questions. However, the questions were open enough to avoid leading the conversation and give space to the interviewee. (see Bryman 2008 and Klotz.& Prakash, 2008).

referring to the title of my research and to the topic as “A postcolonial analysis of EU peacebuilding practices in DRC”.

From May to August 2015 I got no answer beside those by civil society organisations working on peacebuilding. This was really surprising to me, as my expectation was that obtaining these interviews would have been quite straightforward as EU civil servants tend to consider this as part of their job.

Nevertheless, the only interviews with EU Officials in that period were the ones I got by stopping them during events and conferences. Indeed, in this period I was attending workshops, training, events and seminars in Brussels related to EU peacebuilding in Africa in order to introduce myself and ask the keynote speakers and attendees from the European Commission for interviews.

In September 2015, I decided to change strategy and declare that my interest was generically on “EU peacebuilding in DRC”, without mentioning postcolonialism. Answers came very quickly this time.

However, the problem then reappeared during the interviews. When asking questions about EU colonial legacy, the role of Belgium within EU peacebuilding in DRC or the relevance of history in the current peacebuilding procedures, most of my interviewees became upset, and they did not deny being also annoyed by my questions. This reluctance and defensive posture that sometimes was difficult to sustain was hence very meaningful for my study, and it is further considered in chapter 5.

Nevertheless, such results were not enough for my research, but it was the only concrete result I got in the first round of interviews. That is why after several months I decided to apply for an internship position at the EEAS. This allowed me to work in the Division for Central Africa, dealing explicitly with EU-DRC relationship from March to August 2016. This traineeship gave me the opportunity to get to know the practitioners working on DRC and having time to explain my research to them and gradually gain their confidence and trust, allowing me to overcome their reluctance.

In the EEAS I found a team of truly committed people, generally very motivated and passionate about their job. There was a strong commitment to and interest in “making

Africa a better place” and all my former colleagues were working hard to realise a positive improvement in DRC’s conflict situation.

It is thanks to this internship experience that I was able to undertake participant-observation in the 6 months spent at the EEAS. During this period, I was participating in several Conflict Analysis Workshops and in two working groups: Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM) and Council Working Group on Africa (COAFR). Moreover, the possibility of being inside the institution led to a straightforward “snowball process” for gathering interviews.

Finally, I visited the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence in January 2016 to find relevant historical material on the relationship between the Congo and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) or the European Economic Community (now EU). Parts of these findings are the historical bases of the research.

Apart from this, I also conducted explorative interviews with civil society organisations working on peacebuilding in DRC, of which the most important is the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, based in Brussels.

Conclusion

This second chapter provides the theoretical and methodological basis of the study of colonial legacy in EU peacebuilding policymaking.

Firstly, it discloses the decolonial and postcolonial perspectives, and it provides an innovative dimension in the conceptualisation of the connections among the two theories. Thanks to postcolonial and decolonial theory, it is possible to comprehend the constitutive role that colonialism had in the definition of the history of modernity and the global present. These theories represent powerful tools in the analysis of EU colonial legacy.

Subsequently, the chapter unfolds the central concept of colonial discourses taken from postcolonial studies and informed by a Foucauldian understanding. This is particularly relevant as a core concept of the thesis. Indeed, it is through the analysis of discourses that the research aims at discovering the actual reproduction of colonial power/knowledge within EU peacebuilding policymaking.

In order to allow the empirical analysis of EU discourses in peacebuilding policymaking and the assessment of the presence of any colonial legacy, the chapter then translates the theoretical perspective into a methodological framework. Doing so, it aims at contributing to the analysis of discourses by providing a combination of Colonial Discourse Theory and Discourse-Historical Approach (one of the typologies of Critical Discourse Analysis).

Finally, the chapter defines how the methodology has been further translated into methods, and how the analysis of discourses has been applied to the different techniques of data gathering employed in the research: document analysis, archival research, interviews and participant observation.

Having set the theoretical and methodological basis for the research, and having introduced the postcolonial and decolonial readings, it is now time to direct the analysis to a fundamental aspect of the study: the relationship between the EU and colonialism. And the next historical chapter is devoted to it.

Chapter Three

The EU's Colonial History: A Contested Memory?

*“As in our own lives, some things we want to remember,
some things we prefer to forget.”*
(House of European History. Pocket guide of the Permanent Exhibition)

Introduction

It might seem quite redundant to evoke the need to look back at European history to ascertain answers to some of the EU's current issues and problems. What could be more challenging in this claim is that depending on which kind of history we consider as European, we might come up with different interpretations of the past that would consequently modify our perception of present EU actions.

In the first chapter, we saw how EU Studies and EU Peacebuilding Studies tended to merely engage with the history of the EU from its integration onwards, without considering what happened before and the historical past of its member states as a constitutive element to understand the present EU external relations.

Stressing the limits of such an approach, the second chapter proposed the engagement with Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies in order to allow a historical perspective on EU identity and to better understand its current relationship with its former colonies. Such an approach, it was argued, would also allow scrutiny in the empirical research of the legacy of colonialism in the EU's peacebuilding policies in the DRC.

Indeed, my argument in the previous chapters is predicated on the recognition that any understanding of the EU's international condition must grapple with the historical reality of European imperialism and colonialism.

However, if the main interest of this thesis is to look at the EU's colonial past, a step back is needed to unfold a core issue: why should the EU be concerned about its colonial legacies in DRC? How can I assert that colonial memory must be an EU preoccupation in dealing with DRC when it is clear that the Portuguese and then Belgians occupied the Congo and not all Europeans?

These main questions open up a series of broad yet crucial interrogations: is colonialism an EU matter or is it only a concern of the single former colonial powers? How can we claim that colonialism was a European phenomenon –and consequently an EU concern - when only some of the European states, even if the majority, had colonies?

The problem of connecting the EU with colonialism reveals several nodal points to dissolve: First of all, the matrix of all the questions lays in a fundamental perception about the history and collective memory. How can we claim that the current EU Officers should take into account a memory that is not “their own memory”?

Even when the historical continuities are unquestionable, we cannot just assume a simple correlation between historical events and their relevance for the generations that inherit them through history (Trouillot, 2015: 16).

In this sense, Trouillot (2015) mobilises the examples of the “discovery” of the New World: Neither Europe as we now know it, nor whiteness as we now experience it, existed as such in 1492. Trouillot explains that both are constitutive of this retrospective entity we now call the West. In this case, as in many others, the collective subjects who supposedly remember did not exist as such at the time of the events they claim to remember, or they are supposed to remember. How is it possible therefore to find such legacy if the subject in question did not exist in the colonial time?

Trouillot responds to this dilemma by showing that the constitution of a subject goes hand in hand with the continuous creation and recreation of the past. As such, those

new subjects do not succeed in the past, but they are its contemporaries and they carry such a legacy.

The historical relevance of an event in its conterminous subjects does not proceed directly from the original impact of an event, or its mode of inscription, or even the continuity of that inscription, but from the continuous reproduction of such history in the subjects that “inherits” these events.

The same could be said for the case of the EU: As Bechev (2015) observes, the EU now includes Cyprus and Malta which were British colonial possessions until the 1960s, while many of the new Eastern European members had an imperial satellite status vis-à-vis the Soviet Union no more than two decades ago.

This means that the EU not only carries the legacy of imperial rule, but also those of many former colonies. How it is possible though to consider a colonial legacy in a body that is composed of former colonial powers and former colonies?

This third chapter engages with such questions in order to build the foundation for the core thesis. In doing so, it recognizes that the literature on European colonialism tended to highlight the specificities of each imperial configuration, sometimes comparing, some others just analysing the single empires (see for instance Jeronimo and Pinto, 2015; Healy and Dal Lago, 2014 among others). Contrary, here a postcolonial perspective is evoked, one that calls for a global history of colonialism to be taken into account, in the attempt to configure the European history of colonialism as a whole.

What follows is dedicated to showing that both the colonial and the decolonising moment were crucial to the determination of the EU’s identity, and therefore they have to be taken into consideration when engaging in the analysis of the EU relationship with European former colonies.

Quite ambitiously for the limited space allowed, this chapter passes through salient moments of the past to show that European history was profoundly influenced by the relationship of domination with the “others”.

Doing so, this chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section gives an account of the birth of the EU, showing that European integration itself was deeply

entangled with colonial aspirations. In the second section of the chapter the argumentation shifts from history to memory: if colonialism is a European past, can we say that it must form part of the EU memory?

By answering this question, in the final section I consider the case of the House of the European Union, a recently inaugurated museum in the heart of Brussels adjacent to the European Parliament, which provides an account of colonialism as a European phenomenon, and therefore offers an important precedent to the way the EU institutions look at colonialism.

1. Europe in the Colonial Mirror: Why is Colonialism a European issue?

1.1 The Birth of Europe

According to Delanty, Europe is more than an idea and identity, it is also a geopolitical reality, a central characteristic of which was the process in which the core penetrated into the periphery to produce a powerful system of control and dependency (1995). In other words, it was colonialism and conquest that unified Europe and not peace and solidarity (Ibid.).

If from a geographical point of view that is easily understandable, it becomes much more complex when we consider ideas and identity. How much did the colonial enterprises, the expansion, the enslavement and the constitution of empires do to build European minds, aspirations, material greed, and to strengthen a sense of Europe being one region, one civilisation? Several historians have attempted to address this question over the last decades.

One of the most relevant was Chabod, who asserts that it is thanks to “geographic discoveries”¹⁴ that Europe started to create its very moral and political features as opposed to the non-European other. Thus, Chabod illustrates that the very idea of European civilisation was gradually elaborated in the 15th centuries as opposed to the “barbaric” and “savage” indigenous cultures outside European borders. This drastic

¹⁴ I maintain this term to quote the author, although it entails a clear Eurocentric bias.

divide between primitivism and civilisation was further unfolded in the 16th century. Here, the general “outside” started to take different features (the Chinese, the Japanese, the “Orient” and the “Americans” started to be associated with specific moral characteristics) in a way functional to delineate and exalt the idea of Europe.

Quijano argues that during the same period in which European colonial domination was consolidating, the cultural complex known as “European modernity/rationality” was being constituted (2010: 25). This intersubjective universe created by the colonial power was elaborated as a universal paradigm of knowledge and of the relations between humanity and the rest of the world. The decisive weight of coloniality in the construction of Europe and the European paradigm of rationality is, according to Quijano, at the base of contemporary thinking and also one of the reasons for the crisis of this cultural complex.

In the same way, the famous historian, Victor Kiernan, in a significant article written back in 1980, tried to grasp how much colonialism could be considered a European phenomenon. He shows that centuries of exploitation of the outer world, instead of leading to a new multicultural dimension, created the effect of emphasizing the greater gap between the European community of ideas and everything non-European (see Kiernan, 1980:39).

Likewise, Hargreaves echoes Kiernan in sustaining that the racial division at the centre of colonial life undoubtedly helped to give Europeans an immediate sense of distinctiveness vis-à-vis native peoples (1982). Thus, the contrast between white and coloured skins, which corresponded to a sharp political division between rulers and ruled was one of the factors contributing to the relatively high degree of unity felt by Europeans.

Furthermore, Kiernan also suggests that, even if difficult to grasp, there was always a cosmopolitan element in colonial enterprises that could define them as a European phenomenon. This leads him to claim that since the start of European imperialism there was a Europeanisation of domination. Indeed, even though all the early empires were strictly dominated by their own masters, there was a European shared sense of power engendered by the successes of any of them as well as in the pool of material

wealth - bullion, spices, and then tobacco, sugar, cotton - that the colonies produced (Kiernan, 1980:42).

Colonial enterprises became more and more Europeanized over the course of the centuries: “Foreigners wormed their way into the Seville trade with Spanish America, Marranos or Crypto-Jews had a big hand in the trade of East and West Indies, including the slave trade, Jews exiled in Amsterdam came to control a quarter of the shares of the Netherlands East India company. Numerous Germans and others worked for the Dutch in Indonesia. Huguenot exiles in London were active in the English East India Company and its soldiers and civilians in India included a heavy sprinkling of foreign names.” (ibid: 42).

Altogether, those exchanges contributed to the formation of European consciousness of itself, a sort of calm self-complacency that forged the so-called cosmopolitan spirit of 18th century Europe. A spirit of European cooperation for European domination. No better example of this can be found than the Berlin Conference of 1884. On that occasion, fourteen signatory European states attended the conference that formalized the so-called “scramble for Africa” and eliminated or overrode most existing forms of African autonomy and self-governance.

Such European states sat around a table to regulate the partition of Africa in order to avoid warring amongst themselves over Africa: they succeeded in keeping peace in Europe to the detriment of African peace¹⁵.

Kiernan gives proof of this “peaceful coalition” by quoting the speech of an ex-Governor-General of Egypt, Lord Cromer in the House of Lords, on February 6, 1908 : “It is an opening of a new phase of European imperialism in which all the major colonizing nations would come together in order to check those nationalist and ‘seditious’ forces unleashed by the recent victory of yellow Japan over white Russia in the Far East.” (Kiernan, 1980: 45).

Again, it is the idea of European civilisation in contrast to the outside barbarian world that enabled a sense of commonality and a shared view among European thinking, an

¹⁵ The Chapter Four will explore further the Europeanisation of Africa colonisation, in the context of the historical deployment of peace discourse in EU-African relationship.

idea that Europe was progressing through the future while the rest was remaining in the darkness.

The messianic call for European powers to enlighten such darkness was surely different in every country. Every European empire found its own ideological justification to bring civilisation and fostered it with specific colonial discourses. European identity was therefore nursed with these ideas.

After Kipling's call to intervene in the Orient to restore such "degenerated culture" from the lost sense of civilisation, the idea was soon spread that Europe had as its historical mission to civilise the world (see Kipling, 1899). All societies started to be ranked by references to western values posing as universal norms. Colonialism was considered all over Europe as a way of improving barbarians through the contact with European masters, and slavery was even considered a means of salvation of Africa since it would introduce Africans to Christianity and civilisation (see Delanty, 1995 and Hammond and Jablow, 1977 p.23).

These ideals of European civilisation constituted a narrative that permeated incisively European beliefs. In 1933, Eugene Guernier, asserted in his book "*L'Afrique: Champ d'expansion de l'Europe*" that "today's colonization is the synthesis of a moral and highly civilizing endeavour: the gradual elevation of the standing of life of the non-developed races and the no less human endeavour to continuously maintain or even improve the conditions of life of an industrious Europe" (Guerin, 1933 as quoted in Hansen and Jonsson, 2014).

1.2. The Two World Wars and the Eurafrica Project

The World Wars are usually considered to be European conflicts that expanded into a global war, but it is also relevant to see that those are events that brought the "conflict of global imperialism into global war" (Hansen and Jonsson, 2014: 17). In fact, the two major European wars saw large numbers of soldiers from the colonies fighting on both sides, and it was during this horrific experience that European societies were put in direct contact with the colonised societies. For instance, during World War I, France recruited 220,000 workers from its empire (Algeria, Indochina, Morocco, Tunisia and Madagascar) as well as from China to work behind the lines. In total, roughly one

million soldiers born in the colonies fought on the French and British sides in World War I (Nelson, 1970). These direct contacts dramatically affected the perception Europeans had of their colonies and vice versa.

The main consequence was that Europeans could no longer entertain the myth of their so-called “superiority” in the eyes of those “natives” who fought side by side with Europeans. Even more, foreign soldiers felt betrayed after the breaking of the promises made to justify massive recruitment. Indeed, the fourteen-point plan of Woodrow Wilson, which guaranteed independence and territorial sovereignty to some European States did not apply to Europe’s overseas colonies¹⁶.

This contributed to exposing the contradiction between the ideas of national autonomy and the realities of colonial dominance. European leaders were aware that this global conflict opened Pandora’s box of self-determination and anti-colonial feelings, yet they did not alter their beliefs. For instance, when Stresemann at Locarno echoed Briand’s sentiment that good Frenchmen Germans or Britons should also be good Europeans, he deplored the millions of dead of the Great War, as well as the fact that this war had “jeopardized the ascendancy in the world to which Europe was entitled by temperament and tradition” (Kiernan, 1980: 46).

Being afraid of losing their overseas possessions and following the pan-European ideology that blossomed during the interwar period, the European powers constructed a plan to promote a renewed form of colonialism: the Eurafrica Project. In other terms, the promotion of a European integration that would also coordinate joint exploitation of Africa. Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson describe this forgotten yet fundamental part of history in their revealing book “Eurafrica”. They show the plans designed to create a new geopolitical sphere of a united Europe that was imagined sustainable and prosperous thanks to the incorporation and joint exploitation of Africa.

This new form of colonialism, considered the antidote to the pan-African movement, would have not been governed by nationalistic greed but by the true ideals of European civilisation. Indeed, in the years of the Eurafrica project (the 1920s to 1950s), the geopolitical need was still justified by the racial underpinning of the

¹⁶ See also E.Manela (2009) *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, oxford University Press: Oxford.

“negro’s salvation”: there was a general widespread agreement that Europe was meant to conquer and colonize in the name of human values and solidarity.

For instance, the French prime minister Sarraut, during the 1930s, proposed “Eurafrican cooperation” envisaging a thorough Europeanisation of colonial Africa. Such a proposal was transformed into political initiatives through the League of Nations, the International Labour Organization as well as the bilateral and trilateral collaboration among European powers in order to forge what for a period was almost an official foreign policy doctrine. A doctrine that aimed to save the old continent from over-population, economic crisis and anticolonial movements.

According to Hansen and Jonsson, Eurafrica remained a salient and viable goal even after World War II, providing post-war European integration with a purpose and role in the global geopolitical setting that emerged after 1945. Indeed, in the aftermath of the war, Eurafrica gained actual political impact as part of the driving forces towards European Unity.

1.3. Decolonisation and European Integration

After the second world war, a strong anti-colonial sentiment re-emerged. As a response, European colonial powers reacted jointly to stem the tide of independence movements. Anti-colonial uprisings were often sedated by forceful collaborative actions among colonial powers: Britain’s military intervention in Indochina and in Dutch Indonesia gives us a clear example of such a European colonial alliance.

Despite eventually surrendering to the pressure for decolonisation, European powers desperately tried to keep their possessions and, if necessary, to “share their benefits” as joint European possessions. What is not often shown in classical EU historiography, is that during the Conference of Le Hague, on the 8 May 1948, Eurafrican tenet was strongly proclaimed.

Most of the countries supported the idea of creating a common administration of European colonies for the collective benefit of a war-torn Western Europe. This created opposition from those countries, such as France, that were more reluctant to share their own overseas domain. For example, Georges Le Brun Kéris, a member of

the Assembly of the French Union, emphasises to the members of the Political Committee at the Congress of Europe in The Hague the need to establish Europe while allowing each State with colonial responsibilities the freedom to ensure the political, social and cultural progress of the citizens living in its overseas territories, without being pushed through a “Europeanisation” of the colonial responsibilities:

“However, we do not believe, unlike what appears to be being said in support of the report, we do not believe that it can be a positive thing or a good thing to *attempt to combine together, or, if you like, to attempt to determine people’s political, social and cultural progress through joint pressure*. This seems to me, on the contrary, to fall essentially to each one of us according to our individual genius, and it even depends on the very genius of our civilisations that we can undertake this task. This seems to me to be par excellence the political progress, the social progress and the cultural progress that is specific to each of our countries and it is why we have taken the liberty of proposing this amendment, particularly given that political evolution is something we are very familiar with. It is extremely difficult for us to understand each other’s domestic political structures and our domestic political behaviour. But the text, as it seems to have emerged from the report, does not really seem to leave any doors open to what is specific to us in social and cultural terms, within our unions, within our countries, within our mainlands and the territories linked to them”.

(CVCE, 2017a; Emphasis added)

Despite Georges Le Brun Kéris concern, the committees at the Congress of Europe in The Hague agreed on the Europeanisation of the colonies and on their position as “dependant” territories. On 10 May 1948, the Dutch liberal daily newspaper *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* summarises the work of the committees at Congress, explaining that the common view was that European countries must “adopt as its core priority the improvement of the economic, political social and cultural conditions in the dependent

and associated overseas territories and the maintenance of the links between these areas and the European countries”. (Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant, 1948)¹⁷

The final resolution of The Hague Congress reflects this viewpoint, promoting the Europeanisation of the colonies – named from that moment onward as the associated overseas territories - of the member states adhering to the European project.

“The Congress declares that the Union or Federation must assist in assuring the economic, political and cultural advancement of the populations of the overseas territories associated with it, without prejudice to the special ties which now link these territories to European countries.”

(Congress of Europe, 1948)¹⁸

Subtly but constantly, the message of “keeping African’s possessions” is therefore read in documents of that time. In the message that concluded the Congress Plenary, it was stated that:

“Together with the overseas people *associated with our destinies*, we can tomorrow build the greatest political formation and the greatest economic unit”

(Mowbray, 2003: 1. Emphasis added)

Internationalisation of the colonies and cooperation overseas started to become the most common preoccupation of Europe at the beginning of its integration process. Avoiding the international call for decolonisation, European leaders were setting the basis for a long term joint exploitation of the colonies.

Thus, colonial cooperation in Africa become one of the defining priorities of the newly integrated Europe. From that perspective, Africa was no longer a project of colonial

¹⁷ "De politieke commissie is bijkans gereed" in Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (10 mei 1948). CVCE. Full text available at: CVCE, "De politieke commissie is bijkans gereed" in Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant. https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_political_committee_is_almost_ready_from_the_nieuwe_rotterdamse_courant_10_may_1948-en-f8a922b5-a23e-4260-b477-65f1ef097770.html

¹⁸ Political Resolution (The Hague Congress, 7-10 May 1948). Full text available at: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/political_resolution_of_the_hague_congress_7_10_may_1948-en-15869906-97dd-4c54-ad85-a19f2115728b.html

metropolises, but a project for Europe as a whole, including the nations without colonies (see Hansen and Johnson, 2014).

The push for a Europeanisation of Africa's colonies came mostly from those European countries without colonial possessions, whereas the European colonial powers were more sceptic in sharing the management of the colonies with the other European countries.

In this respect, Pasture reminds us that proponents of European investment in Africa claimed support from, in particular, German and Scandinavian resources of capital and manpower. For Germany, the association with the Overseas Territories constituted an asset in itself whereas Belgium, adopted a cautious tone, as it feared intrusion of European institutions into its sovereignty and had no intention of having other European countries "benefit" from its colonial riches. (2015: 189)

When the Treaty of Rome decreed the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957, European powers had to rescale their imperial ambition to fit with the irreversible decolonial momentum. However, the Treaty found an arrangement that formally allowed Europeans to posit their interest in Africa despite the decolonial requests: European colonies became the Association of Overseas Countries, as they were associated to the Common Market (with the exception of Algeria that was included in the Common Market). This allowed special cooperation and aid regimes to the Overseas Countries, but at the same time, it was a way for Europe to never step out from the role of patron and indeed to prolong domination. Not surprisingly, these territories were not involved in the debate regarding their association with the EEC.

As has been noted (Pasture, 2015), in the Council of Europe Europeans diverged on almost everything but not on the need to exploit African resources and they constructed development policies to maintain the link that would have allowed them free access to raw materials, energies and foodstuff and space, but also strategic geopolitical bases.

The economic reason behind this was not hidden and besides this, it underpinned a clear tension: a peaceful united Europe was about to rise again over the exploitation of Africa. And such contradiction emerged in several speeches. For instance, the

Strasbourg Plan stated that: “We must also if free Europe is to be made viable, jointly exploit the riches of the African continent” (Secretariat General Council of Europe, 1952 as quoted in Hansen and Jonsson, 2014: 114). Whereas the Schuman Declaration remarked that: “With increased resources, Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent” (Schuman Declaration, 1950).

Both sentences are based on a sharp colonial dualism: free Europe, pacified and developed was allowed to exploit African riches in order to “save” Africa. In other words, the setting of European development and peacebuilding policies went hand in hand with a process of common exploitation of Africa’s resource.

This point was also extensively demonstrated by Veronique Dimier in her book “*Recycling Empires*”, which studies European development policy in Africa from the beginning of the EEC in 1958 until the present day. Drawing on historical neo-institutionalist theory, she gives an illuminating example of the *longue durée* of the colonial structure by analysing how colonial practices became the basis for the creation of the EU’s development programs. She argues that a French ex-colonial administrator led the Directorate General for Development (DG8) and “recycled” colonial practices in Brussels, thus creating an institution that for a long time maintained a “colonial identity” based on opaque, patriarchal and anti-bureaucratic systems.

As we will see in chapter four more specifically, the idea of development and bringing peace seemed a refreshing way of keeping the African continent under European authority. Not surprisingly, the idea of creating a European Development Fund was French; they requested that the other European powers finance development instruments for Africa in order to maintain some influence there, and they obtained the creation of the European Development Fund in exchange for the opening of its African market to Europe.

As mentioned, the Association of Overseas Countries, as well as the new European Development Fund for Africa were decided on unilaterally; no discussion with the emergent political elite of the territories was established at a time when these territories were supposed to be granted more political autonomy and power (see Lister,

1988 and Dimier, 2015). No wonder that this new Association was seen by many Africans and their allies as a new “*Pacte colonial*” which would allow former colonial powers, frustrated by years of absence in Africa, (namely Germany) to come back and exploit it economically under the flag of the EEC (Moreux, 1952b, p. 2785 as quoted in Dimier, 2015: 15).

African leaders started feeling clear that the new integrated Europe was trying to internationalize colonial abuse with a new, up-to-date system. A move that Aimé Césaire seems to have anticipated in his Discourse on Colonialism in 1950 (see Césaire, 2000) and that several anticolonial authors remarked upon in their anticolonial calls against the European coloniser rather than against a singular nation-state:

Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration. And yet it may be said that Europe has been successful in as much as everything that she has attempted has succeeded. Europe undertook the leadership of the world with ardour, cynicism and violence. Look at how the shadow of her palaces stretches out ever farther! ...Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe.

(Fanon, 1968: 251–2)

In the eyes of the American sociologist, Susan Sontag, it was quite significant that the Europeans’ choice of the road to integration coincided with the crumbling of colonialist and imperial structures. On examining the European policy of France and Germany in the 1950s and 1960s, she said that it was not difficult to observe attempts

to gain ascendancy within the continent once the world ascendancy seemed to have been irretrievably lost.

Sontag points out that while the importance of Europe in world politics has waned, there has been a growing tendency to speak of the Europeanisation of Europe rather than of the whole world (Sontag, 1989). Contrary to Sontag's assertion, however, what this historical detour has shown is that the integration process has always been connected to the attempt to include colonies in the new integrated Europe.

The integration process, therefore, did not happen *because of* the crumbling of colonial structure, but it happened *in the hope of keeping* such structure. All the steps made during the decolonial years merely attempted to adjust European aspirations in Africa to the new inevitable reality of independence.

2. Conceptualising the EU's Colonial Heritage

The success of anti-colonial struggles prevented the creation of a West European colonial monolith that would have meant joint exploitation of Africa to the benefit of the union of the most powerful West European imperial states. Instead, the European Community and then the European Union undertook a series of steps that moved the two continents away from colonial exploitation.

A series of EU-Africa agreements rooted on the idea of peace and development have been signed since and this will be widely considered in a dedicated section of the thesis (Chapter 6).

However, this does not prevent us to remember what the foregoing arguments indicate: the birth, expansion and integration of Europe is deeply related to the colonial project. Colonialism, as has been shown, is a European phenomenon and it is at the basis of EU integration. Thus, it is fair to ask, to what extent such history is of significance for the contemporary EU? This question is pivotal in the context of this thesis, as it reveals the sense of the whole investigation: it is the European dimension of colonialism that renders it an inescapable memory for the EU and that moves this study into the research of the legacies in the EU present and in its peacebuilding relations with one of the formerly colonised countries.

By trying to answer this question, it is of great help to draw on Böröcz and Sarkar's illuminating article, "What is the EU?" (2003). The authors study the external features of the EU in order to comprehend what the EU identity is about. In doing so, they evoke fundamental aspects of the EU: the states that constituted the EU before the big enlargement to East Europe were the same states that had exercised imperial rule over nearly half of the inhabitable surface of the globe outside Europe just two to three generations ago (Böröcz and Sarkar, 2003: 160).

According to Böröcz and Sarkar, the consequences of such affirmation are at least threefold. Firstly, this is a reminder that the EU is the historic heir to those states that have literally carved up the rest of the world for centuries. As Michel Foucher (2001: 160) points out, approximately 60 per cent of the borders outside of Europe have not been drawn by the states adjoining them today; they have been indeed drawn by European colonisers. This, as Böröcz and Sarkar (2003: 163) reminds us, also applies to Central and Eastern European borderlines, drafted by West European imperial powers as part of the dissolution and reorganisation of various local empires.

Secondly, the subjugation and exploitation of actors, processes and structural conditions outside Europe by Western European states is reflected in the current EU reliance on external actors, processes and structures. Indeed, Böröcz and Sarkar explain that the colonial past works both as a system of path dependence that limits actors' ability to take new directions - and as an institutional component of global hegemony, "a storehouse of inherited socio-cultural patterns of thinking about, and behaviour concerning, 'Europe', the rest of the world and that very distinction" (2003: 163).

Thirdly, Böröcz and Sarkar also point to the importance of imperial-colonial ties in the early emergence of some West European states to a position of global power, stressing that the advantageous position the societies of Western Europe enjoy in the world economy today derives from colonial history. This position of economic advantage and international power is a defining aspect of the EU's daily reality, as well as a key reason for its attractiveness to applicants for full membership and the main driver of foreign aid and peacebuilding missions. Thus, "the EU shares and pools in its member states' colonial loot, and the applicants are now asking for a share" (ibid). Finally, I would add to this list of crucial factors that link the Union with its colonial past, an

important, often underestimated aspect: there are still territories that are not decolonized under the influence of the EU. Hence, there are two groups of territories that are connected to the EU even if they are located in remote parts of the globe. Firstly, the so-called “Outermost regions of the EU”: The French overseas departments of Martinique, Mayotte, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Réunion; the French overseas community of Saint-Martin, the Portuguese autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores and the Spanish autonomous community of the Canary Islands and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla¹⁹.

Secondly, there are still 25 non-sovereign “Overseas Countries and Territories”: a variegated group of countries that did not end up as sovereign states during the thrust for decolonisation and whose EU responsibility is enshrined in the Treaties. Indeed, although not part of the EU, most inhabitants of OCT’s countries have EU citizenship²⁰. Though small and remote, those countries have great geopolitical significance. Given that we are talking about “non-European domains” under EU control, it is evident that the very existence of these territories is fundamentally in contradiction with the EU’s dominant self-understanding of a free community of states. It is clear, therefore, that the EU has not come to terms with the historical as well as the current relationship between Europe and colonialism.

Such considerations raise several concerns regarding the way the EU is managing its colonial heritage, as well as its “colonial present”. If it is true that so far the European colonial history has not been examined in a rigorous fashion, we must also stress that in recent years there has been an incentive from the European Parliament to “forge” the history of the EU and in this effort, surprisingly, colonialism takes its part.

¹⁹ Though Ceuta and Melilla are not officially considered as ORs, they are fully incorporated in the EU.

²⁰ For more information about OCT’s courtiers you might look at Nissen and Gad, (eds.), (2012) *European Integration and Postcolonial Sovereignty Games: The EU Overseas Countries and Territories*, London: Routledge.

3. Politics of Colonial Remembrance

3.1. What is the European Memory?

In chapter one, it has been noticed that for decades EU Studies have refused to include colonialism in their analysis. However, as explained above, colonialism is central to the definition of Europe and to European integration as well.

Therefore, it is legitimate to wonder why such an important part of European history has not been considered by EU scholars. In addition to what has been exposed in chapter one, about the connection of EU theorists with EU practitioners, and the specific Eurocentric features of the EU Studies discipline itself, it is also important to notice that a process of memory selection has excluded colonialism from being an EU's epistemological concern.

The study of this process of memory selection has resonant relevance for the thesis, as it has an implication in the way the study of colonial legacy in EU peacebuilding policymaking is accepted or refused in the discipline, and also in the way the study itself might reveal blind spots that have not been taken into account before.

According to Calligaro (2015), the process of European integration went in parallel with the process of building a European memory by selecting and choosing which kind of past the EU wanted to have. Similarly, Ifversen (2010) talks about the creation of a European myth as a narrative that legitimizes a community and its principal driving forces. He sees the EU as being created by a tripartite myth of European foundation organized around three moments: breakdown, rebirth and progress. The breakdown of the two world wars, the rebirth rising from the ashes of the conflict through integration, and the steady progress to the future to new heights of well-being and prosperity. It is interesting in this framework to consider what is the role of colonialism in this myth and if it has a place at all.

For Calligaro, the creation of a myth and memory is a top-down approach intended to carve out and legitimise only some aspects of the history that the EU would keep as European memory.

Therefore, emergent European institutions acted as “memory entrepreneurs” in order to institutionally produce memories. One of these examples of past-engineering and past selecting can be seen in the way in which the EU is appropriating the memory of political crimes and human rights abuses. It is certain that critiques of Nazism and the Holocaust are regarded as a key element in the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War.

Yet, as already noticed by other scholars (Bhambra, 2009 et al), this critique of oppression and domination does not usually extend to the contemporaneous other forms of oppression and domination that involved European states with other parts of the world. Colonial brutalities were never raised to the level of “Holocaust” as constituting the EU’s memory.

The process of “memory selection” to forge a European identity included the horrors perpetrated within its borders but excluded the horrors perpetrated outside those borders. This gives us a certain conception of Europe which might be partial and misleading if it does not also include the part that it failed to acknowledge. For instance, the critique of Nazism and Holocaust tends to show a pacified Europe after the Second World War, devoted to civic and political liberties, which is not completely true if we consider the elided colonial abuses that continued also after the Second World War; the Algerian War of Independence, the Mau Mau rebellions against British imperial rule, and the “Congo Crisis” (Wagner, 2005).

If we use Chakrabarty’s lexicon, we might say that such mechanisms of exclusion in the EU official narrative are ways to make minority histories’ become subaltern pasts (2000, 100).

In other words, the European colonial past, which is a story of submission and exclusion of a dominated group from political discourses, becomes also marginal as a memory because it is not functional to the present image of the EU. It is to say that, whereas the memory of Nazism and Holocaust helped to build the idea of a reunited and pacified Europe, the memory of colonialism was too thorny to be used as a symbolic representation and furthermore, it could have damaged the very narrative of liberal integration of civilian states that surrounded the birth of the EU.

In this respect, Calligaro (2015) noted that common European historical facts are not retrieved in order to produce a deep elaboration of the past, a shared view on common accounts. On the contrary, she believes that the EU is embedded in a “presentist regime” of historicity, in which all historical facts become only functional as occasions for commemoration without necessary elaborating and deeply reflecting on the history. Therefore, histories that are not functional to the present representation of the EU tend to be left aside.

3.2. The House of European History

No other place can symbolize the construction of a European memory better than the House of European History (HEH). The Museum, inaugurated on 6 May 2017, is located in Brussels, close to the European institutions, and is the realisation of an idea launched in 2007 by the president of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering, with the idea to “create a locus for history and for the future where the concept of the European idea can continue to grow” (Pöttering, 2007) . The Museum itself was created by a board of international experts that worked together with, and under the supervision, of the EP's Directorate-General for Communication.

From the perspective of the thesis' research objectives, the HEH is a fascinating place in which to understand the official construction of the historical narrative about colonisation and Europe. Indeed, it is the place where, for the first time, colonial history has been institutionalised at the European level.

It is argued that an investigation of how colonial history is passed on in the Museum, what is forgotten and what is added on, with particular attention to hidden histories and the reasons why they are missing, can shed light on the way the European Parliament wants to institutionalise the colonial memory at the European level.

The first important aspect to be noticed in the analysis of the museum is that in both the conceptual basis' documents and in the exhibition itself there is given relatively ample space to the colonial issue²¹.

²¹ In order to analyse how the colonial memory is framed in the HEH, I have been studying the “conceptual basis” document of 2008, in its revised and final version of 2013, and in the actual

Despite the first conceptual basis of the museum describing colonialism in a generally positive tone²² (see also Settle, 2015) by giving an image of colonialism as functional to the European *grandeur* and eliding considerations on the people living in the colonised regions, the document “Building a house of European History”, created in 2013, seems to move away from such Eurocentric biases and to include also the “darker side of colonialism”²³.

This idea has been further developed in the exhibition itself. While asking what is Europe and what binds the continent together, the exhibition considers the main driving forces that shaped Europe and the main aspects of European heritage: democracy, humanism, civil rights, nationalism but also colonialism and the slave trade. Regarding colonialism, the exhibition displays an 18th-century African icon that depicts the white man, whereas the audio associated with the object explains that:

Many in Europe believed it was their natural destiny as members of a superior race, to assume control of others. Colonised were nearly never invited to express their opinion. European colonial powers grew fantastically wealthy but inflicted misery, inequality and racism on the people they had colonised. In the 20th century, they either relinquished the colonies entirely or were forced to give them up as the colonies demanded freedom and self-determination. Europeans often have seen their role in the world as of bringers of civilisation. But do the other people have the same view?

(Audio guide, Permanent Exhibition, 2017)

exhibition. Moreover, I have been interviewing curators (both academics and MPs) to understand the process that led them to the definition of the official position regarding colonialism.

²² In the first conceptual basis document there is a clear Eurocentric bias in the way the colonial process was illustrated.: “*The phenomenon of colonisation demonstrates the importance of one of the key driving forces in European history. [. . .] Migration pushed people to explore new parts of the world and to develop a powerful military culture in order to occupy and maintain colonies*” (Committee of Experts, 2008:11) Or again in a next passage: “*The economic development of Europe partly stemmed from the benefits obtained from the colonies in Africa and Asia*” and that “*Great Britain’s ‘colonial administration was considered exemplary*” (*ibid*:14). As Veronika Settle (2015) shows, this view seems to erase the subjectivity of colonized countries creating the effect of reproducing the colonialist view that there were largely unpopulated territories waiting to be explored by the Europeans.

²³ We can read: “*There was no more obvious gauge of progress, in the eyes of the European elite, than the expansion of European colonial power. The sheer scale of imperial expansion bolstered the self-held European sense of superiority compared to the rest of the world. Nationalism and the vision of European civilisation were permeated by racist and social Darwinist ideas. Before World War I, Europe was at the peak of its global power.*” (European Parliament 2013, 33)

Here, colonialism is finally associated with the colonised denied experiences of exploitation and there is a reflection on the moral justification of such violence. Furthermore, references to colonialism continue in the space dedicated to Imperialism in the 19th century: the memory of a globally dominant Europe and of the industrial revolution is associated with remembering the economic exploitation of colonies and the human rights abuses. Moreover, echoes of colonialism are evoked in the area dedicated to World War I. A gigantic photo of soldiers is displayed: it shows a European soldier side by side with Asiatic and African ones²⁴. The choice of showing World War I as a conflict in which the entire colonial world was mobilised, is a welcoming step towards a more realistic understanding that moves away from the canonised accounts.

In synthesis, the HEH tells us that we must consider colonialism as part of a European shared past. That provides a really important basis for this research as it explains that the European Parliament decided to institutionalise and spread the vision that colonialism was integral to European history and therefore part of the EU memory.

However, what seemed a promising introduction for a complete reconsideration of colonial history, ends up being a great disappointment in the rest of the exhibition.

After mentioning colonialism again in the room dedicated to the Second World War, there is no relevant mention to it in the rest of the exhibition.

Unlike the final arrangement of the exhibition, the conceptual basis of 2008 was referring to the decolonial momentum after 1945²⁵, and to the relationship between decolonisation and European Integration by remarking that:

²⁴The explanation states “*Soldiers recruited from the overseas colonies of Great Britain and France added a global dimension to the war and increased cultural interaction in Europe. Britain recruited 827.000 men from India, while the French armies included more than 500.000 troops from countries such as Algeria and Senegal*”.

²⁵ We can read: “Despite these political changes, the European colonial powers were determined to regain the control over their dependent territories in Africa and Asia which in many cases had been lost as a result of the war. Armed conflicts quickly broke out, for example in Dutch Indonesia or French Indochina, some of which were to continue for the next two decades” (Committee of Experts, 2008:19) and again “Following the debacle suffered by Great Britain and France in the Suez crisis in autumn 1956, the pace of decolonisation increased once again. In the colonies, national liberation movements turned to armed force in order to overthrow the ‘white man’s rule’” (Committee of Experts, 2008: 20).

The political influence enjoyed by the European powers at world level was diminishing day by day. One reaction to this loss of influence was the decision to establish the European Economic Community (EEC), which was formally ratified on 25 March 1957 in Rome. In organisational and legal terms, the EEC was the precursor of the current European Union.

(Committee of Experts, 2008:19)

This extract is particularly relevant in showing the discourse of a disappointed and weak Europe who, having lost “its colonies”, reorients its energies to the internal integration process. This discourse has been discussed in the previous paragraph and dismantled by showing evidence of the attempts to create a Eurafrikan project.

However, in the final version of the Museum, there is no track of such discourse. The exhibition is focused on reproducing another discourse: the one that presents the birth of the European Union as an international peace project. Indeed, ample space is dedicated to displaying documents, photos and materials about the end of World War II, the rise of Communist dictatorships, the post-war economic crisis and the blossoming of an idea of peace through the Declaration of Human Rights and the process of European Integration.

According to what is depicted, World War II, acting as a catharsis, led to the creation of the Declaration of Human Rights and “formed the basis for building a new Europe” (Committee of Experts, 2008: 18).

The museum, indeed, shows the classical myth of the European historiographical discourse considered by Ifversen (2010), which represents the EU as rising from the ashes of total chaos, vowing to never again repeat the mistakes of the past. A “classic” discourse that is structured around “the triple foundation of breakdown, rebirth and progress” (see also Huistra, Molema, Wirt, 2014:132).

In this narrative of peace in unity, there is obviously no space for the decolonial story, one that would clearly show the contradiction of such a simplified account. One that, as I mentioned before, could explain that the rebirth of Europe after WWII was not a

global renaissance but was designed to help Europe rise once again over the exploitation of Africa; a peace project built on the oppression of non-pacified others.

In fact, as demonstrated in the previous sections of this chapter, the very European institutions that were created at the beginning of the European integration process were highly involved in the process of turning old colonial dominance into a new system of dominance based on bureaucratic assistance and economic exploitation.

In summing up the analysis of the HEH, it can be argued that it represents an important source to understand the linkage between the EU and the colonial legacy. Indeed, the EP's effort of creating a museum that reflects on European shared pasts resulted in a wide reconsideration of colonial history. Most importantly, it shows that a rising interest from the EU is growing in bringing the colonial memory to the surface, and starting dealing with it as a global European question.

However, the most blatant shortcoming is the fact that such a historical account is not completely narrated. Rather, its account abruptly ends before the creation of European integration, not giving any signs of reception of what could be a linkage with the present. Perhaps, it might be suggested, to ensure that the liberating and peace-based nature of the European success story is not suffocated or tarnished in any way.

Conclusions

By engaging with the history of Europe, several confirmations emerge as a fundamental basis for the setting of this thesis. In the first place, I have shown that European history is not neutral, but a process of selection and omissions, which brings to the surface only those memories that are functional to the present *status quo*. The logical consequence that arises in this explanation is that the European colonial memory has been for a long time forgotten and hidden behind the single empires' histories.

Nonetheless, the EU has made a considerable effort to include colonial memory in its heritage. Most importantly, this chapter demonstrates that colonialism is considered a European phenomenon not only by historians but also by the European Parliament. The example of the House of European History indeed shows that a top-down effort of forging EU history did not escape from putting a sensible emphasis on colonialism as a European joint memory.

However, the argument also enables us to reflect on the fact that colonialism is depicted in a way that does not allow a complete rethink of the phenomenon as a part of the EU itself, but only as a remote memory of the imperial past, which has nothing to do with the present EU project.

Undoubtedly, this historical detour provokes a number of questions on the relationship between the EU and its colonial heritage. If we stated that there is a shared European colonial past and that the European Parliament is institutionalising this past as a European collective memory, this research asks whether the EU addresses such a past, or takes it into account in everyday EU policies? Are there legacies of this past in the way the EU is relating to former colonies? Are there other EU Institutions dealing with former colonies responding to the Parliament's "institutionalisation" of colonial memory?

Uncomfortable and potentially divisive as they are, such questions must be openly debated rather than swept under the carpet. And that is what this thesis is about, mobilising the specific case of the production of peacebuilding policies in DRC.

Thus, as we move on through the thesis, the leitmotif of colonial obliviousness is relaunched. We will see that despite the Parliament's input of reflecting on colonialism, there is no echo of that within the broader EU institutional structure.

More specifically, the empirical chapters that follow will reveal and interrogate (in particular chapter six) the different ways in which the idea of a colonial legacy is received and articulated by practitioners that deal with the construction of EU peacebuilding policies in DRC.

Chapter Four

Bringing Peace to Africa

Introduction

In the previous chapter, it has been claimed that colonialism was a European phenomenon, integral to European history and to the formation of the EU. It has also been revealed how the European Parliament is engaged in framing the colonial memory as an EU legacy in the context of the House of European History.

In this fourth chapter, the emphasis remains on memory and historical continuities from Europe to the EU, but it is more specifically focused on one of the pivotal concepts of the thesis: of the idea of “peace” and the discourse of bringing peace to Africa.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the official historiography of the EU allocates a crucial role to the notion of “peace”. It is commonly said that the EU has been historically conceived as a peace project with the aim of ending the division produced from two world wars that divided the continent into opposing fronts (see Tocci, 2008 and 2011; Björkdahl, Richmond and Kappler, 2009; Natonsky, 2001 among others). The pacification of the continent after the Second World War is seen as the central myth that allowed the birth of the EU (Ifversen, 2010).

Similarly, in 2012, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU because of its role in helping to transform “most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace” (Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2012). This indicates that the EU’s *raison d’être* is to be a peace project ending centuries of warfare in Europe and that peace has fundamentally shaped its external mission.

Indeed, the internal dimension of peace was historically mirrored in an external dimension of bringing peace outside of European borders. The same observation made in chapter one relating to the internal and external dimension of normative power Europe (see Manners, 2001 and Keene, 2003) could be considered also for the concept of peace. Europeans found it necessary to civilise themselves by pacifying the country after the Second World War, but this process of civilisation and internal struggle for peace was also accompanied by a long historical process in which Europe used the discourse to bring peace outside its borders.

The European integration served as a pacified regional forum to fortify the mission of exporting European values to the outside world. What is interesting to notice, is the tension among this internal and external vision. For example, Hansen (2002) and Bhambra (2009) reflect on the fact that the myth of “*pax Europea*” to describe the birth of the EU, was only made possible by obscuring the history of the colonial periphery and to depict colonialism as a real peace mission. For example, the authors notice that at the time of the Schuman Declaration in the 1950s, the British Army was oppressing the Mau – Mau uprising and the French Army was fighting both in the Algerian War of independence and in the “dirty war” in Indochina (Blanchard, Lemaire, and Bancel, 2014). While constructing the myth of a peaceful Europe, the coexistence of colonialism is disregarded as another history, or rather, is justified by the same discourse of bringing peace abroad.

As already remarked in the introduction of this thesis, the significance of the notion of peace for the internal and external history of the EU is one of the main reasons that brought me to select the policies of EU peacebuilding as a case study. Indeed, it is extremely interesting to examine whether this historical emphasis on building internal/external peace had an impact on the peacebuilding policies in the contemporary context. Has the historical legacy of Europe’s image as a peace ambassador impacted on contemporary EU peacebuilding policies? To what extent is this linked with the justification of bringing peace as a colonial discourse?

As we will broadly see in the next chapter, peacebuilding is frequently seen as a relatively new set of instruments that allows the EU to engage in conflict-prone countries. However, it is the intention of this thesis to show, despite the use of technical tools to solve conflicts, that the moral discourse of bringing peace is not new.

Europe has been using it frequently with respect to the African continent in particular. More precisely, the objective of this chapter is to prove that EU peacebuilding practices in Africa, despite being considered mainly as technical instruments, are embedded in a moral discourse that is very similar to the one created in colonial time and that continued also after decolonisation.

In this context, this chapter shows the discursive conditions that allowed the creation of contemporary EU peacebuilding policies in DRC, which is the objective of the empirical analysis of the thesis.

In this sense, this chapter can be seen as a genealogy that reconstructs continuities and discontinuities in the narrative of bringing peace to Africa, from European integration until the present days.

In such a genealogy, “bringing peace to Africa” is considered a narrative structure: a way to organise the genealogy of colonial discourses through histories as well as its present symbolic order (see Keller, 2005).

To this end, the chapter is divided into two sections. Section one provides an overview of how the newly integrated Europe was able to make a paradigmatic shift in the relationships with Africa after decolonisation. In the second section, the study reveals the moment in which development policy in Africa moved from apolitical intervention to more political involvement, in which the peace issue gained prominent importance.

1. Bringing Peace after the Empires: Discursive Shifts During European Integration and Decolonisation

As mentioned in chapter two, one of the discursive strategies used to support the colonial discourse was the one about pacifying the dark continent, exorcising the chaotic and violent darkness by bringing order, morality and civilised institutions and beliefs. This moral justification of colonialism was so pervasive to the point that Bates argues that the imperial peace is still commonly viewed as one of Europe's principal contributions to Africa's development, offering a respite from the misery of warfare and slavery (2013: 424).

Decolonisation and contemporary European integration provided an important discursive shift in European-Africa relationships. Even though political and economic entanglements endured, the formal reacquisition of independence represented a moment of profound realignment. The changing social and political setting caused a re-articulation of the discourses of bringing peace to the dark barbaric savage.

After World War II the right to self-determination and the existence of universal human rights came to be increasingly accepted. Formal refusal of racism became a justification for colonial expansion in the international community. This imposed a change of discourse in European colonial possessions. The superiority of the white man, that - as it has been exhaustively explained in chapter two - was the nodal point of the colonial discourse, could not be accepted anymore as the justification of the colonial expansion.

If race could not be considered anymore as the ultimate signifier of colonialism, inequalities of the international sphere were not overcome and Europe had to find another apology to keep its overseas possessions.

Chandler (2010) considers that in the aftermath of World War II the colonial discourse was kept alive by a replacement of the concept of race by the concept of culture. Cultural differences were given the same determining weight as earlier distinctions of the race on the basis that cultures were separate, homogeneous and with their own paths of development (Malik, 1996: 149–177). The hold of the past over the present enabled a moral rather than a racial critique of the capacity of the colonial (and post-colonial) Other (Chandler 2010: 373).

This shift of discourse allowed the European powers to keep the colonial possessions and resist the decolonising wave.

The European intrusion in African affairs did not stop after decolonisation and European integration did not mean the separation from the bonds with former colonies, but a new way of keeping such links, that required new discursive justifications.

The shift of discourse, was essential for the newly integrated Europe to leave behind the race arguments and project itself as a new moral actor, whose progress and development were the key features to justify intrusion in the African continent.

Several authors confirm that in the EEC the “moral preoccupation” for Africa remained fixed component, yet it found different ways of developing its discursive strategies in its historical evolution (see Langan, 2016 and Ziai, 2015). In the same vein, the “peace argument” was used to maintain the relationship before and after the decolonisation even if the European Community was war-torn itself.

In an excellent book that analyses the history of Europe, Patrick Pasture ponders how it was possible that once the European Community gave up its colonial ambitions it was immediately able to adopt a discourse of peace and progress in Africa; a discourse that was unspoiled by its colonial past (Pasture, 2015: 191). The answer – as alluded to more generally in chapter 3 - can be systematised in three main parts:

Firstly, the transition from a colonial empire to ‘Europe the fair’ (ibid.) was possible by silencing the racism and the violence of the imperial crusades whilst leaving their moral justification alive. Indeed, remarkably swiftly, colonialism vanished from European memory: virtually all representations, textbooks and overviews on European integration and the Foreign Relations of the EU remain silent on it (Ibid.). The Historical Museum of European History, analysed in the previous chapter, provides the same reproduction of this erasure: from the disposal of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the decolonisation process, there is no mention any more about the colonial legacies, whereas the newly integrated Europe continues to embrace the moral role of guide for the “Third World”.

This erasure has been long portrayed in EU Studies (see chapter one) and by the European Official voices. Indeed, as Huber pinpointed, the academic disinterest for the colonial question could be put in parallel to the silence of political contemporaries (2013)²⁶.

A clear separation from Europe to the European Community was created. And this separation was really persistent. For example, EU Commissioner at the time, Claude Cheysson, some 30 years after European integration was launched, emblematically remarked:

“The Community is weak, it has no weapon, it has no aircraft, it has no submarine, it’s completely inapt to exercise any domination. This in many ways is a great asset to deal in the Third World, to discuss with the Third World. The European Community is young, it has no past”.

(Claude Cheysson, 1981 as quoted in M. Lister, 1988)

However, at the same time the moral ambition that justified colonialism remained very deeply anchored to the idea of Europe. As Ziai (2015), Langan (2016), Pasture (2015) Huber (2013) and others point out, the humanitarian project of saving, civilizing, pacifying seemed to continue after decolonisation and was used for the purpose of creating development and an assistance programme for Africa that would allow the economic linkage between Europe and Africa to continue.

In the sixties, political speeches were referring to the European Economic Community using moral discourses of responsibility and solidarity for African countries (see Huber, 2013: 42) reinforcing the “missionary identity” that came intact after decolonisation.

Secondly, the European humanitarian ethos was also so deeply internalised by the colonised countries, that even after centuries of racism and violence, formerly colonised countries believed in the ultimate role of a peaceable Europe and in the

²⁶ There are, however, rare cases where, during the sixties, European practitioners have commented on the changes wrought by the decolonisation. For instance, Albert Coppé, European Commissioner that led an interim High Authority in the European Coal and Steel Community in 1967 declared that, as the Copernican revolution needed time to show the Science that the World is not at the centre of the Universe, it will need time and patience to show that Europe is not at the centre of the world”. (HAEC, 1964:7)

advantage of having the European Community as a peacebuilder agent in their countries. This process is what Fanon called the “lactification” of consciousness (Fanon, 1970: iv and Wirth, 2006); as a result of centuries of colonisation, the blacks (but in more general terms the colonial subjects) assimilated the myths of inferiority and incapability of leading their own socio-political reforms without the help from the former colonial countries. In other words, this “epidermalization of inferiority” (Enberg, 2011) was internalised so much that Africans moved towards a mindset in which they believed that they could only be “saved” by a peace process led by the Europeans.

Thirdly, as Pasture also noticed, the end of World War II and the European integration were used by the EC to progressively introduce the peace argument to interfere in the non-European area. Peace was functional to European Community self-definition as it described well the myth of the redeemed war-torn countries that raised from the ashes and created peace integration. But at the same time, it also served as a way of maintaining relationships with former colonies. It is to say that, once reached the internal pacification, the EC could replicate its model outside its borders.

The same point is also made by Keene when describing the historical features of normative power, considering that once the internal peace project had been successfully completed, Europe assumed its new institutional forms, and could return to its mission of exporting these values to the outside world (Keene, 2013: 953). The most vivid example of this is the Schuman declaration, in which an agreement about coal and steel production became a symbol of the possibility of spreading peace in the world:

The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.

or

This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to

promoting peaceful achievements. With increased resources, Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent.

(Schuman, 1950)

From Schuman's portrayal of Europe as a benevolent protagonist in Africa, discourses of solidarity not only provided a pillar upon which continuing relations with Africa could be legitimized but also established an ethical purpose upon which the European project could be discursively removed from past horrors. These aspects contributed to the continuation of European interest and preoccupation in African peace affairs and backed the progressive raising of the idea of European peacebuilding in Africa. In the following sections, we chart the evolution of such discourses in the different EU African agreements.

2. Peace Argument in EU-Africa Agreements: From Apolitical Development to Peace/Development Nexus

Even before decolonisation, Europe's development assistance to Africa became established as a constitutive part of the European project.

As African colonies moved towards independence, countries of Europe wanted to find a way of associating their former colonies with the new structures of the Community while also safeguarding their historical links with their empires, but in a way that was perceived apolitical and far from colonial. The main preoccupation of European countries after decolonisation was to provide development tools to Africa as an exchange to keep the economic interest of European countries alive, while not being perceived as neo-colonial (see ERD, 2009 and CVCE, 2017).

Development policies became the best solution to this political and economic interest.

Thereby, development was discursively introduced to legitimise ties in a post-colonial period and the idea of responsibility and duty for the African former-colonies became central to the European project. Europe's development assistance to Africa implanted colonial discourse into a new technical instrument, where European's role and

responsibility toward Africans did not change that much. (see Langan, 2015 and Ziai, 2015).

The final two points of the Treaty of Rome of 1957, clearly state that the EEC intends:

[...] to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries and desiring to ensure the development of their prosperity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations” and that it is resolved “by thus pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty, and calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts.

(Treaty of Rome, 1957)

Those two points indicate clearly the connection between the intention of “strengthen peace and liberty” internally and the pursuit of “development of their prosperity” externally.

This point has been further touched by Jean Monnet, when in the preface of Duroselle’s essay “*L’idée d’Europe dans l’histoire*” mentions European states, uniting their peoples in the United States of Europe, will bring an internal peace which could be the beginning of the organisation of peace in the world²⁷ .

When in the early 1960s, most of the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) associated with the European Community gained independence, this created a need to re-examine the nature of the association agreement annexed to the 1957 Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and to create a convention negotiated together with the newly independent states in order to enshrine these major changes.

Reflection on how to adapt the association of the OCTs was led in particular by the EEC Commission’s Directorate-General for Overseas Countries (DG VIII), the

²⁷ Original quote : « Ainsi les nations d’Europe [...] unissant leurs peuples dans les Etats-Unis d’Europe [...] donneront à tous les hommes cette zone de paix qui pourrait être le commencement de l’organisation de la paix dans le monde. Full text available at : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/100books/es/detail.html?id=23>

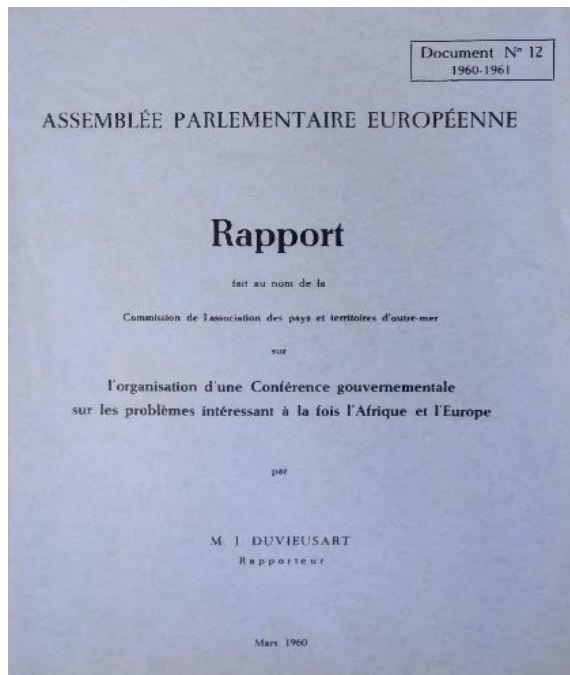


Figure 1. Report by the European Parliamentary Assembly on the holding of a governmental conference on issues concerning Africa and Europe (March 1960) . Source: HAEU.

European Movement and the European Parliamentary Assembly, and especially by two parliamentarians, Jean Duvieusart from Belgium and Alain Peyrefitte from France.

On the initiative of the Parliamentary Assembly, a Euro-African conference was held in Strasbourg from 19 to 24 June 1961, attended by MPs from both continents. A total of 18 African states, all French-speaking except Somalia, expressed their desire to negotiate a new association agreement with the EEC to consolidate their privileged position with regard to the Community (CVCE, 2016).

Official negotiations between the EEC Member States and the associated states began on 6 December 1961 in Paris and culminated in the signing of the Yaoundé Convention on 20 July 1963.

In the final Report of the European Parliamentary Assembly about the organisation of a Conference about the issues of Africa and Europe, we read:

The Parliamentary Assembly reminds the desire of seeing the relationship with Overseas Territories associated to the Community becoming more and more multilateral and egalitarian, knowing the rapid evolution that should bring this population to a more prosperity and freedom , and underlying the important role that the European

Community in the effort to promote the Associated Overseas Countries in their effort to peace and freedom [...].

(European Parliamentary Assembly, 1960)

In the Report, we still see the emphasis on the European interest in bringing peace in Africa. However, after the ratification of the Yaoundé Convention and until the early years of the Lomé Convention, the European Community decided to pursue a policy that Marjorie Lister describes as ‘discreet entente’: an unequal, political relationship that was officially portrayed as non-political “a policy that tried not to look like a policy” (Lister, 1997:19).

Indeed, the European Community stopped considering the peace and conflict situation of African States as something to be included in its official objectives. For almost two decades the European Community decided not to interfere directly in African conflicts as it was preoccupied in showing any interest in African internal politics that could give rise to neo-colonial allegations (see Dimier, 2014; Huber, 2013; Langan, 2016 and Rutzaibwa, 2015).

This extract of an interview with Umberto Stefani, Chief Adviser in DG VIII in charge of negotiation with ACP from 1977 to 1986, reveals a lucid awareness of the EEC fears of being considered colonial:

From Europe, they feared disguised colonization. They still had the prints of the old ... So they had to choose between freedom in uncertainty and security in servitude. That was their feeling. In November 1959, on my return, I made a rather long note in which I said that Africa was a continent by itself, and not an extension of Europe as we believe. The reports had to change. I suggested an association council but as, initially, one had to negotiate and contract and not carry gifts, sporadic presents perhaps desired and sometimes hurtful [...].

(HAEU, 2004, INT 761, author’s own translation)²⁸

²⁸ « *Histoire interne de la Commission européenne 1958-1973* » Entretien avec M. Umberto STEFANI par Michel Dumoulin et Julie Cailleau à Bruxelles le 26 janvier 2004 (26.01.2004). HAEU, INT 761.

As Dimier and Lister show, this core idea of respect for the independence of “the Overseas partners” and of EEC political neutrality in practice reinforced the EC relationship with African elites. Not interfering in peace and conflict affairs, according to Dimier, meant engaging in “dangerous liaisons” (Dimier, 2014) with infamous dictators such as Idi Amin, Bokassa and Mobutu. This “apolitical” stand was often criticised by the Parliament when complaining about the Commission’s total absence of reaction on human rights abuses and on the propagation of conflicts on African soil (ibid.).

Only in 1977 did the ECC start to impose the first sanctions by suspending assistance to Uganda and then Equatorial Guinea. But the ECC was reluctant in taking measures to stop human rights violations and the escalation of conflicts in Africa, being aware that it would have contradicted the fundamental principle of non-interference in the African internal affairs (see Dimier, 2014: 113). Slowly and steadily, however, the concept of development became broader, the connection between economic development and peacebuilding became mainstream and Europe’s interest in being involved in conflict resolution in Africa grew.

Despite the European attempt to include a linking of aid provision to human rights even as early as the negotiations for Lomé II, this was strongly refuted by the ACP group (see Hurt, 2003). The inclusion of human rights into Lomé III was an ACP demand “directed against the EEC states that were in a close economic (and political in some cases) embrace with the Apartheid regime of South Africa” (Greenidge 1999, p.116). For this reason, the EEC insisted that it should be relegated to an annexe rather than being incorporated in the body of the text. (see also Raffer, 2001).

It was only in Lomé IV that the reference to human rights entered in the text of the Convention and with Lomé IV bis (1995) that the legal framework for sanctions was established. This metamorphosis reflects several trends, already noted by other authors (see Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė, 2006). First, post-colonial violence and war became much more widespread and visible (and the Balkan effect in European imagination was strong), the intellectual and political hegemony of the Western “liberal peace model” became greatly strengthened after the end of the Cold War, and Rwanda

tragedies²⁹, more than any other, clearly demonstrated to both development and humanitarian actors that economic development even if implemented successfully, could lead to disaster if conflict dynamics were not understood (see Uvin, 2002 and McCandless, Karbo, 2011: 32 but also Duffield, 2001).

Chandler (2010:376) identifies that a discourse of culture operated as a delimiting framework for peacebuilding intervention in the 1990s. A good example of this he mobilises Kaldor's idea of new wars as irrational, driven by private interest and politically illegitimate (Kaldor, 1999). This conception of conflicts in the third world as irrational – that has a clear colonial derivation – served as a legitimisation for intervention. The irrational conflicts are due to moral and cultural backwardness that legitimised European intervention and discursively repositioned the European rights as a peace ambassador.

It is indeed in this period that we witness a blossoming of documents that point to the fact that there cannot be sustainable development in situations of pervasive and chronic insecurity and hence the root causes of conflict have to be addressed before self-sustained development can take place (cf. Commission 1996; OECD 1997).

This galvanized the creation of the “new humanitarian consensus” (Merlingen & Ostrauskaitė 2006:50). This was underpinned by the belief that there is a link between human rights and peace, especially with reference to ethnicity and identity-based wars, “human rights and humanitarian violations lie at the heart of many conflicts” (SG/HR & Commission, 2000:8)

The official portrayal of the EU–ACP relationship as economic, and hence non-political, changed definitely in 1995 with Lomé IV. This became the first development agreement to incorporate a human rights clause as a “the fundamental” part of the cooperation (article 5).

Here, the emphasis is put on the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance; strengthening of the position of women; the protection of the environment; decentralised cooperation. The translation to involvement in African

²⁹ In the annual report 1994 “The year of the Rwanda tragedy”, the European Community Humanitarian Office concludes “conflict prevention is increasingly seen as imperative if there is to be any reduction in the scale and depth of the human misery caused by war”. (ECHO, 1994: 24)

peace and conflict issue started being seen in explicit mention to the emergency support in case of displacement due to conflict or a natural disaster (art.255.2).

The Mid-term review of the Lomé IV that took place in 1994-1995, in the context of major economic and political changes both in ACP countries and Europe, introduced clearly the respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law as essential elements of the Convention. A clear consequence of this is the start of the conditionality clause: and the possibility of suspending aid to ACP countries in cases of grave violation of agreed values and principles.

The emphasis on human rights and the use of conditionality set the basis for the rebirth of the discourse of “bringing peace to Africa”. Lomé IV served as a framework for the EU to focus more directly on the issue of peacebuilding in Africa.

It is not accidental that also in 1995 the EU Council adopted the Conclusion on Preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa, which explains the role of the EU in taking part in Development Cooperation with the objective to strengthen peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution. Following this conclusion the EC published the communication to the Council “The European Union and the Issue of the Conflicts in Africa: Peacebuilding, Conflict prevention and Beyond” in which we read the moral justification of the EU’s intervention in peacebuilding:

The European Union is heavily concerned by the issue of conflicts in Africa. This is not only because the international discussion necessitates an adequate response of the Union, not merely because of the *moral obligation to reduce human suffering*, nor simply the obligation to use its resources in the most meaningful way. For the European Union, the existence of violent conflicts in Africa is increasingly challenging the achievement of its declared policy goals. Fostering peace, stability, democracy and human rights under the conditions of conflicts is a nearly impossible task.

(EC, 1996. Emphasis added)

Here we can see that the EU's concern about conflicts in Africa is justified by a moral obligation. It seems that it is again the white man's burden that is imposing on the EU an obligation to take action after two decades of pause. The EU is called again to act as a peace ambassador due to its messianic duty.

The growing interest in African conflicts started being institutionalised in the Cotonou Agreement that followed the Lomé Conventions. Vanished the fear of being considered neo-colonial which meant excluding political involvement, in this broad agreement -a partnership between the EU and 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) - politics is set at the centre of the EU-ACP relationship.

Several scholars correctly argued that with the exception of their common colonial history, the ACP countries are very diverse geographical and cultural areas, kept together by the EU regime of foreign aid policies(see Haastrup, 2013: 792).

Largely comprising the former colonies of France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK, the ACP group is considered by some to be a colonial construct. Beyond a shared history of colonialism, there is little that binds the group except for climate change and some aspects of development. Certainly, the peace and security challenges faced by Caribbean and Pacific countries are very different from those confronting Africa. Some EU member states, the Netherlands and Germany in particular, would like to see an overhaul of the ACP system. The coercive ability of the EU to bind together the ACP countries has been further explained by one of my interviewees who points:

It is not a mystery that behind Cotonou there is France willingness to keep the old empire together. From Haiti to Vietnam and Gabon: what is the common trend if not having been part of the colonial empire? But we need this framework, as much anachronistic as it might seem, because it is our frame of action in the word.

(Int. 1)

In the Cotonou Agreement, peacebuilding assumed a fundamental role, being the first preoccupation of the political pillar – one of the 5 pillars that compose the Agreement. Poverty alleviation, aid concessions, solidarity, equality between 'partners', and European benevolence are reaffirmed, but after the Cotonou Agreement development was inevitably linked to peace.

An important component of the Cotonou Agreement is the so-called political dialogue focusing on issues of mutual concern and carried out by the parties in conformity with policies “to promote peace and to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflicts” (Art. 8). Art. 11, dealing with peace-building policies, conflict prevention and resolution, obliges the parties to “pursue an active, comprehensive and integrated policy of peace-building and conflict prevention and resolution within the framework of the Partnership” and stipulates that this policy “shall be based on the principle of ownership,” and provide support for “mediation, negotiation and reconciliation efforts.” Finally, “in situations of violent conflict, the Parties shall take all suitable action to prevent an intensification of violence, to limit its territorial spread, and to facilitate a peaceful settlement of the existing disputes” (Cotonou Agreement, 2000).

The points raised in Cotonou were further underlined in the EU Council Conclusions on Security and Development of November 2007, which stipulated that the nexus between development and security should inform EU strategies and policies. The second revision of the Cotonou Agreement also recognised the interdependence between security and development, stating that without peace and security there can be no sustainable development. (see APF, 2013).

The European Development Fund (EDF) that channels development assistance under the Cotonou Agreement started financing peace-related programs and from 2003 the EDF also finances the African Peace Facility (APF), which provides political backing and substantial funding to the African Union's and African Regional Economic Communities' efforts in the area of peace and security in three inter-linked priorities: Enhanced dialogue on challenges to peace and security, Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and Support to Peace Support Operations (PSOs) in Africa. (Ibid.)

The Cotonou Agreement became the overall umbrella also for a comprehensive “continent-to-continent” dialogue on peace and security. In 2000, the Cairo EU–Africa Summit set in motion a structured EU-Africa political dialogue, which was reinforced by the 2005 EU Strategy for Africa, the first attempt to establish a single framework for continental engagement. These first steps were mainly characterized by unilateral European efforts to design a credible approach to African development and security challenges, without the effective involvement of African actors. This severely

undermined the pursuit of a frank and cooperative political dialogue, reaffirming a traditional and unequal donor-recipient relationship and fuelling African mistrust of proposed actions (Pirozzi, 2010).

On the European side, addressing the instability of the African continent represented more and more a major concern for several reasons: instability could undermine trade and the economic relationship with the EU and also because of the fear of its possible repercussions in terms of illegal immigration, arms trafficking, terrorism and organised crime.

What followed, was a Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) which was launched at the Africa–EU Summit in Lisbon in 2007. This long-term strategic partnership set the comprehensive framework within which specific strategies had to be put in place, and the first objective (out of 4 areas) is peace and security. The thematic partnership on “peace and security”, whose three top priorities are enhanced dialogue on peace and security challenges, operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and adequate funding for Africa-led peace support operations.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) was billed as a ‘people-centred partnership’, and greeted with enthusiasm by civil society organisations. The JAES promoted the idea of moving the relationship between Africa and the European Union (EU) beyond a donor-recipient framework, towards long-term cooperation on jointly identified mutual and complementary interests³⁰.

³⁰ The JEAS represent the final point of a discursive shift of language which moved from identifying Africa as dependent, to a progressive narrative of equality and partnership, to a final turn to the importance of African ownership of his peace processes. Even if the Yaoundé I convention recognized the Overseas Territories as equal to the EEC, many authors identified that this cooperation was considered as “*rendez-vous between giver and receiver*” (EEC, 1963: 9) where imbalance in discourses were still present in the power dynamics between the two parties. If Yaoundé gave rise to narratives of ‘sovereign equality’, from Lomé the focus is on the idea of “partnership”, Indeed, ‘the spirit of Lomé’ became shorthand for the normative dimensions of the Europe–Africa relationship, embedding norms of solidarity, equality, concern for ‘the poor’, and an equitable North–South partnership, in a way to portray an egalitarian post-colonial partnership. Despite the emphasis of ‘partnership’ there have long been those who have questioned this. Lomé was also seen to foster dependency through its claimed effects on African unity or prospects for pan-African regionalism. Shaw (1986) argued that the maintenance of ‘vertical’ ties to Europe inhibited the forging of ‘horizontal’ ones in Africa. Galtung supports this argument pinpointing the ‘structural imperialism’ of the Lomé regime, which, he argued, forced a regional (and unequal) division of labour through the preponderance of ‘vertical’ ties to Europe (Galtung 1976). Thus, while Lomé may have allowed the development of ‘local capitalism’, it could not be anything but a ‘trap’, diverting the ACP from their attempts to develop self-reliance (ibid). The Cotonou Agreements took the same emphasis of partnership that was in the Lomé Conventions.

While promoting the novelties of the Joint Strategy, the JAES explicitly mentions the power asymmetries of the previous conventions, and the idea of overcoming these and “to move away from a traditional relationship and forge a real partnership characterized by equality and the pursuit of common objectives” or “To promote more accurate images of each other, in place of those that are dominated by inherited negative stereotypes and that ignore the overwhelmingly positive developments on the two continents.” (JEAS, 2007)

The JAES is based on principles of ownership, as well as partnership and solidarity. Since 2007 the principle of African ownership has started being presented as a way to overcome EU-Africa imbalance of power. Its main assumption is that it is primarily the responsibility of Africans themselves to handle their internal affairs, following the motto “African solutions to African problems³¹.” Local ownership is asserted on many occasions in the JEAS, even though it remains unclear what this shift entails exactly since the concept is never clearly defined. “EU support provided will apply the principle of African and local ownership and should follow African agendas” (JEAS, 2007 art 32:8) “combining strong African ownership of programme design and implementation with provisions for strategic and political EU level involvement” (JEAS, 2007 art 33:8).

What is clear, however, is that African ownership does not indicate a European disengagement from the African continent. On the contrary, we have seen that the progressive idea of African ownership goes hand in hand with the previously underlined EU tendency of gaining more and more “control” on African political processes. Emblematic in this sense is the case of EU intervention in African conflict management.

As Rutazibwa has also pointed to elsewhere (2015), the current EU position towards African peacebuilding seems riven in two apparently opposed trends: A progressive interference in all domestic African affairs that touched also the peace and conflict issue and a contemporary shift of terminologies (from parties to partnership, equality and sovereignty) that arrived to stress the importance of African ownership over their

³¹ With this regard, it must anyways be noticed that the concept of African ownership is an old one, employed also in colonial time. For example, the Belgian ministry of Colonies in 1940 said “Of course we consult with indigenous population and we let them decide about their own future. We know already that Belgium will win all its trials” (HAEU, PHS, 84:4)

own peace policies. In a similar vein, Rayroux and Wilén (2014) observed the following paradoxical development: mounting intrusion in domestic African sovereignty in peace affairs was increasingly accompanied by firm declarations from the donors about the need for national ownership of peacebuilding programs and policies. The authors pinpoint that the EU is compelled to find a delicate equilibrium between promoting an “ill-defined concept of ownership while retaining direct involvement in Africa”. (Rayroux and Wilén 2014:24). Controversially, it seems that the principle of ownership, instead of promoting a disengagement, provides the EU with a renewed legitimacy to retain a strong role in the building of peace in Africa.

3. Contextualising the Debate in the Broader EU-African Literature

What we have seen so far in this chapter is the trajectory of the idea of bringing peace to Africa, from the collapse of the Empire to the present day. Throughout this duration of time, the EU and African Countries have failed to break the long-standing power asymmetry. This inherent tension has been reflected in the body of academic literature dealing with the relationship with Africa, the ACP, and the EU, and this thesis has already presented some of the prominent academic works that touch on the problematic dimensions of the relationship. Kotsopoulos and Mattheis (2018: 446) add to this asymmetry and important dimension. They reflect on the fact that the persistence of unevenness in EU-Africa relations is also reproduced at the level of scholarship. When looking at the literature on EU-Africa relations, there is indeed a relative underrepresentation of studies from Africa. With great and welcome exceptions, including works by Adebajo, Babarinde, and Oloruntoba among others, there is still a disproportion between the number of journal articles concerning EU-Africa written by European and by Africa-based scholars; and this is even higher when we consider how much the African perspective is underrepresented in academic curricula and debates. With this premise in mind, it is also Kotsopoulos and Mattheis (2018: 446) who tried to provide a contextualisation for the study of relations between the European Union and Africa by identifying seven major trends and drivers that have characterised the literature surrounding the relationship: colonial legacy, meanings of partnership, asymmetry, market liberalisation, politicisation, regional actorness, and the changing global order.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been explained that norms regarding Europe's essential task and ethical responsibility to facilitate Africa's peace have long been embedded in the relationship with Africa. Indeed, the chapter demonstrated how the discourse of bringing peace to Africa evolved over the course of history.

It has been considered how the discourse changed gradually as an effect of European Integration and decolonisation leading to the image of "Europe the fair" with respect to Africa.

Further, it has been examined how the EU progressively decided to pursue a policy of non-involvement in African politics, in order not to be considered neo-colonial and to pursue its objective of maintaining the economic relationship with Africa through development.

Finally, the chapter shows how in the 1990s the notion of bringing peace to Africa regained space, and the EU recommenced involvement in African peace and security issues while at the same time supporting such interest through the same moral responsibility narrative.

The fact that Europe's moral responsibility for Africa was never put in question, and that the colonial discourse of bringing peace was never challenged by the Europeans, not even after decolonisation, brings a relevant consideration for the thesis.

Indeed, it shows that EU peacebuilding operates in a paradigm in which the European role has always been the one of carrying responsibility for African peace. Despite the different historical moments that allowed or not the intrusion into African conflict solutions, the ideologies for intervention –be it race, culture or ownership – reproduced constantly an asymmetric relationship.

In the next chapter, we will see how this historical relationship relating to "bringing peace to Africa" provided a framework for the analysis of EU peacebuilding policies in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Chapter Five

EU Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Introduction

In the previous chapter, an overview was provided of how the European discourse of bringing peace to Africa developed from European integration, to show what has been the critical junctures in the creation of continuities and discontinuities.

Considering the framework of EU-African agreements on peace and security, mentioned in the last chapter, in this chapter space is given to the explanation of EU peacebuilding instruments that are employed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This chapter is relevant in its provision of the context of the empirical analysis of the thesis that is rooted in the study of EU peacebuilding policymaking discourse towards DRC, with the intention to see how the colonial legacy is considered and if colonial discourses influence and shape EU peacebuilding policies.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first one introduces the concept of international peacebuilding, the second one focuses on the specific features of EU peacebuilding and the final one provides an overview of EU peacebuilding practices in DRC.

1. Defining Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a fuzzy term per se. The word ‘peacebuilding’ does not have a translation in most languages other than English, despite it being a substantial area of policy and operations for a number of international actors. Thus, the notion of peacebuilding remains one that is notoriously difficult to pin down (see also Duke and Courtier, 2009) in terms of not only meaning but also differentiation from other similar and linked terms such as conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation, peace-making, and state-building etc.

As we saw in chapter one, peacebuilding is commonly understood as a broad range of activities to solidify peace in conflict-prone and post-conflict countries and avoid the relapse into violent wars (Newman, Paris and Richmond, 2009). It implies the effort to render those countries in conformity with “the international system’s prevailing standards of domestic governance” (Paris, 2002: 638) which Oliver Richmond defined as democratisation, economic liberalisation, neoliberal development, human rights and the rule of law (2007).

Some have argued that peacebuilding should address basic human needs, which when threatened can cause conflict: social stability, internal security, economic opportunities, a reasonable standard of living, and recognition of identity. Cockell (2000) adds that another common feature in peacebuilding is the emphasis on assisting societies in their capacity to resolve conflicts without violence.

Civil society has become, indeed, the most common interlocutor of external peacebuilding support, with the accent often being on strengthening the role of civil society in the stable governance of the polity. This growing role led Chandler (2010) to consider that the civil society paradigm is the most silent feature of the liberal peace discourse.

As we have seen in the historical perspective of EU-Africa, it is also important to consider the link between peacebuilding and development. From a broad perspective,

peacebuilding ranges from prevention via crisis management to post-crisis activities. Within this spectrum, several concepts are discussed and instruments are applied.

This explains the multiple dimensions of peacebuilding, that can take different forms: disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants into civilian society, (DDR) rebuilding governmental, economic and civil society institutions, strengthening the rule of law (for example, through training and restructuring of local police, and judicial and penal reform); transitional justice and improving respect for human rights through the monitoring, education and investigation of past and existing abuses that triggered conflict; providing technical assistance for democratic development (including electoral assistance and support for free media); and promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques, as well as engagement in immediate post-conflict security needs.

The current debate refers to the term “liberal peace” or “liberal peacebuilding” to name the dominant framework currently applied to post-Cold War policies and practices of post-conflict intervention. Indeed, it is argued that after the Cold-War a progressive alignment has been found towards what is considered in the literature as the “peacebuilding consensus” (Richmond, 2004). In chapter one we have broadly touched upon the academic debate around the concept of peacebuilding and its possible postcolonial interpretations. Building on the existing academic debates and definitions the scope of this section is to explain what the specific EU peacebuilding framework consists of.

2. The EU Peacebuilding Framework

Whilst peacebuilding is central to EU external policy, it is not spelt out in a clear policy statement what this means. The absence of a peacebuilding strategy per se suggests that it is easiest to think of peacebuilding as a framework, since it links together different threads, from conflict prevention, crisis management, peacemaking and post-conflict stabilisation. Moreover, the lack of definition also suggests that peacebuilding is still a matter of debate between European actors that focus on different aspects of peace but who have overlapping competencies in conflict resolution.

According to Martinelli (2006,) conflict prevention and crisis management are key objectives in the EU's search for international security, which is based on the assumption that development is conditioned by peace and stability and on the recognition that peace, security and development are inherently connected and compounded by the imperative of good governance. The EU's overall approach to peacebuilding rests on the key notions outlined by the United Nations in its various documents: An Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992), the Millennium Development Goals (UN,2000), *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all* (UN, 2005) and the High Level Panel Report *on Threats, Challenges, and Change* (Annan, 2004). According to Björkdahl, Richmond and Kappler (2009), in this sense, the EU complies with the general promotion of the liberal peace through the application of these principles and a long term approach to building a peace that includes neoliberal aspects promoted by the International Financial Institutions.

In addition, the EU emphasises the promotion of democracy, human rights and strengthening civil society through dialogue in the fulfilment of what has been commonly perceived as its civilian power (ibid.). Indeed, the current EU peacebuilding approach is the result of evolving policy practices and not of a preconceived general policy: the EU adopted a mosaic of documents on specific priorities that later were incorporated into EU activities (Natorski, 2011).

This series of EU policy documents conceptualising the principles, objectives and methods of addressing peacebuilding demands, underpinned the development of many

policy tools employed under different conditions of conflict prevention and peacebuilding³². However, the EU approach differs from the UN approach to peacebuilding on a specific point: the EU has frequently depicted itself as a value-led power. Thus, it puts emphasis on being a moral actor that undertakes peacebuilding activities in order to promote its unique values in the world. Indeed, as we also noticed in the literature review on EU Studies, there is a strong ideational dimension in EU foreign policy, both self-proclaimed and postulated in academic circles. This has been evident in the discursive emphasis to promote its missions, as shown above, but also in the practices in the ground. Dorly Castañeda-Lefevre (2012) in this sense considers the differences between EU and US' peacebuilding programmes in Colombia, stating that in the creation of its 'Peace Laboratories' the EU is able to propose an original approach to peace-building based on security, development, and democracy.

Peacebuilding as such is the perfect ground in which the EU can promote "its values"³³. In chapter one, we identified a moral attitude in the EU's international relations, which was encapsulated by scholars in concepts such as civilian power/normative power/ethical power Europe, among others.

This ideational dimension, a "values-inspired philosophy" (Richmond et al., 2011: 456-7), clearly dictates its relations with the rest of the world – a phenomenon that Carl Bildt has named the "European conscience". According to this notion, the Union is morally compelled to defend its values whenever they are compromised and especially in cases of large-scale human rights violations (Bildt, 2008: 48).

The idea of EU as "a community of values" (ibid.) has been explained in the first chapter, where it has also been shown that some scholars have started to link the

³² The main legal framework for those policy documents are the Communication on Conflict Prevention (European Commission 2001) and the EU Programme on the Prevention of Violent Conflicts or so-called "Gothenburg Programme"³² (Council of the European Union 2001) and recently Joint communication on "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crisis" (JOIN, 2013). In addition to these general policy guidelines, the EU also adopted a whole series of specific policy documents guiding its peacebuilding-related policies: electoral assistance and observation; governance and state institutions; children and gender issues in the context of conflicts; Small Arms and Light Weapons; Security Sector Reform; Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; state fragility; security-development nexus; and mediation. (see Naturski, 2011)

³³ EU Values are defined by the Treaty of the EU as "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" (TEU, 2012:17). As former Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn has put it, "Geography sets the frame, but fundamentally it is values that make the borders of Europe" (2005: 2).

civilian/normative/ethical dimensions of the EU's identity with the civilising ethos of the European colonialism.

With this regard, in the previous chapter, the example of the genealogy of the discourse of bringing peace to Africa has been provided, showing that the EU's interest for conflict resolution in the African continent came from the uncontested discourse of colonialism, that has never been put into question even after decolonisation. Here we can see how EU peacebuilding documents still contain moral discourses on the supremacy of European values in the international sphere as a basis that legitimised interventions.

Documents about EU peacebuilding reveal a value-based thread through the discursive representations of the EU's involvement in external actions.

Indeed, to respond to the ambition of being a peace project and a “force for good” (Solana, 2003), the European Commission and Council developed a multitude of approaches and instruments in which we can see the ideational dimension. The *incipit* of the document on Conflict Prevention (2001) for example, gives space to the myth of European peaceful integration able to diffuse its peace model abroad:

The EU is in itself a peace project and a supremely successful one. It has underpinned the reconciliation and peaceful development of Western Europe over the last half-century, helping to consolidate democracy and to assure prosperity. Through the process of enlargement, through the Common Foreign and Security Policy, through its development co-operation and its external assistance programmes, the EU now seeks to project stability also beyond its own borders.
(EC, 2001:5)

The strength and attraction of the EU model evidenced by the on-going enlargement process. In offering the prospect of European integration, the EU has already helped the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their struggle to become stable democracies and functioning market economies. This has been a driving force to move from division to unity.
(EC, 2001:7)

Those are the years of the normative power Europe instilled in the process of enlargement and in the EU involvement in the Kosovo war as a way to “extend this community of peace” (EC, 2001: annex). In a similar vein, the EU Programme on the Prevention of Violent Conflicts puts emphasis on the “moral responsibility” of EU success, to prevent conflicts by spreading its values:

The international community has a political and moral *responsibility to act* to avoid the human suffering and the destruction of resources caused by violent conflicts. The *European Union is a successful example of conflict prevention*, based on democratic values and respect for human rights, justice and solidarity, economic prosperity and sustainable development. The process of enlargement will extend this community of peace and progress to a wider circle of European states; and,

In line with the *fundamental values of the EU*, the highest political priority will be given to improving the effectiveness and coherence of its external action in the field of conflict prevention.

(Council, 2001:2. Emphasis added)

As discussed in chapter one, the EU progressively moved away from depicting itself as a normative power to a more realistic approach. This is mirrored by a decline of emphasis on values and a more pragmatic orientation to the peacebuilding issue.

A decade after the Communication from The Commission on Conflict Prevention (European Commission 2001), the EU revived its commitment to peacebuilding and conflict prevention through a series of policies like the Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention and the Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises. Those documents are an example of this shift of the EU foreign policy.

The EU has a vital interest to prevent, prepare for, respond to, address and help recovery from conflicts, crises and other security threats outside its borders – this is a permanent task and responsibility, already recognised in both the European Security Strategy and the EU Internal Security Strategy. This is the case not only because the EU is widely considered as an

example of peace and stability in its neighbourhood and in other parts of the world, but also because it is in the EU's global interest.

(EC, 2013)

Here it is clear that the EU still talks about its permanent task and responsibility to prevent conflicts, and still portrays itself as an “example of peace”. However, together with the normative discourse, there is also a more pragmatic discourse that emerges, related to the “EU vital interest to prevent” and the “EU’s global interest”.

This pragmatic turn was followed by the concept of “principled pragmatism” announced in the EU Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy (EUGS, 2016), and that has been widely considered in the first chapter.

Here it is worth noticing that the EU peacebuilding practices changed according to the changing discourse: large-scale military interventions and initiatives undertaken over the past decade in theatres as diverse as Afghanistan, Bosnia and the Democratic Republic of Congo gave way to more long-term post-conflict reconstruction and a comprehensive approach that attempts to align civil and military instruments.

However, the pragmatic turn and the rescaling of ambition in peacebuilding practices, does not mean that the EU is giving up on the idea of having its “own values” and to be willing to normatively spread those in peacebuilding policies. The EUGS represents more an admission of EU’s limits in shaping the outside world based on its normative principles, rather than a rethinking of the principles itself (see EUGS, 2016).

3. EU Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo

In this part of the chapter, the EU Peacebuilding framework in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be analysed. Moving from the general framework of the EU involvement in peace and conflict in Africa that was underlined in the previous chapter, and having also explained what EU peacebuilding consists of and what its normative underpinning is, the thesis now turns to the specific case study.

Before going into details about the technical aspects of EU Peacebuilding in DRC, a brief historical overview of the “peace narrative” in Belgian Congo is provided.

This will frame the study of EU involvement in conflict resolution in DRC, which is the objective of the last section of this Chapter.

3.1 Brief History of Pacifying the Congo

i. Peace Narrative in Belgian Congo

It was not until 1867 that the Congo was explored by Europeans. Setting out from Zanzibar, Henry Morton Stanley, a British-born American journalist took a wide detour overland until the Congo estuary. During his well-known “voyage” in the Congo, Stanley was sending dispatches to the Daily Telegraph, in which he expressed “the enthusiastic energy with which we rushed through the lands of the cannibals” (The Telegraph, 1874: 215).

Indeed, Europeans got to know the Congo by Stanley’s dispatches in which he gave an idea of Africans as cannibals, violent, warlike savages, totally opposed to his attitude as clever and rational peace-searcher:



Figure 2. Stanley in Africa. Source: The Daily Telegraph

The savages seemed to think that we had no resource left but to surrender and *be eaten at their leisure*. Again and again, were we compelled to repulse the *furious charges* that they made to drive us over the Falls; or,

Down the natives came, fast and furious, but in magnificent style [...] We had, however, no time even to breathe a short prayer or to think of indulging in a sentimental farewell to *the murderous cannibalistic world* in which we found ourselves. The enemy, in full confidence of victory, was on us, and the big monster as it shot past us launched a spear – the first. We waited no longer; they had clearly come to fight. The *cruel faces*, the loudly triumphant drums, the deafening horns, the launched spear, the swaying bodies, all proved it; and every gun in our little fleet angrily gave a response to our foes.

(The Telegraph, 1877. Emphasis added)

The picture of the dark violent continent circulated around Europe and it was emphasised in writings, illustration (see Figure 2), poems and journals. This depiction of the dark Congo was complemented by the narrative of Stanley's peaceful goals. Such narratives were very powerful and soon spread even outside European borders. For example, in an article of the South Australian Weekly Chronicle, we read:

“Stanley's business on the Congo was “*to peacefully conquer and subdue it [the Congo]*, to remould it in harmony with modern ideas into national states, within whose limits the European merchant shall go hand in hand with the dark African trader, and justice and law and order shall prevail, and murder and lawlessness and the cruel barter of slaves shall forever cease”.

(South Australian Weekly Chronicle, 1885. Emphasis added)

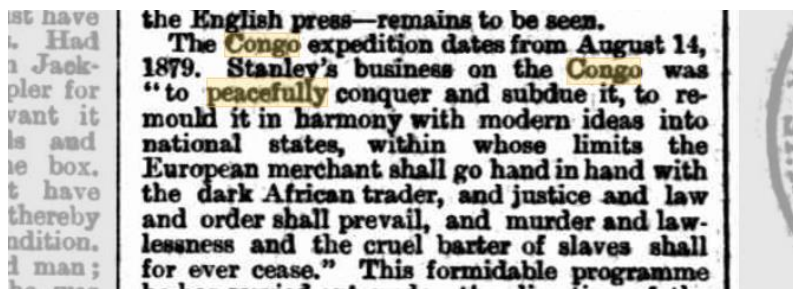


Figure 3. Extract of an article about Congo on Stanley's peaceful conquest. Source: South Australian Weekly Chronicle, 1885.

Stanley was glorified across Europe, and once back from Africa, his aspirations of commercial exploitation of Africa, in the goal of "*pour the civilisation of Europe into the barbarism of Africa*" (Stanley, [1909], 2011: 333) met with the desire of King Leopold II of Belgium whose ambition was to have a colony for his country.

Through a series of bilateral treaties at the time of the Berlin Conference (1884 – 85), the United States, Germany, Britain, and other powers recognized Leopold's control of the Congo Free State –(*État Indépendant du Congo*).

Recognition led to occupation and exploitation. The result was a notorious abusive, violent regime³⁴ fuelled by redundant propaganda. In this sense, Matthew Stanard

³⁴ Literature on violence in the Congo Free State is extensive. For an introduction, see Slade, R. M. (1962). *King Leopold's Congo*. Oxford University Press; Slade, R. M. (1962). *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the development of race relations in the Congo Independent State*. New York, Oxford UP; Roes, A. (2010). *Towards*

explains clearly that King Leopold II managed to maintain his domain in Congo thanks to a rigid separation from colony to metropole: from one side he was pursuing a massacre in order to pillage the Congo and reap maximum profit for the metropole and on the other hand he was spreading propaganda of his humanist crusade in Congo with the intent of suffocating the voices about his cruelties that started to be raised around Europe³⁵.

And in this propaganda, the narrative of “bringing peace” was one of the most persistent. The International African Association, then the International Association of the Congo were two scientific and philanthropic associations used to justify the ambitions in the Congo by Leopold II before the creation of the Congo Free State.

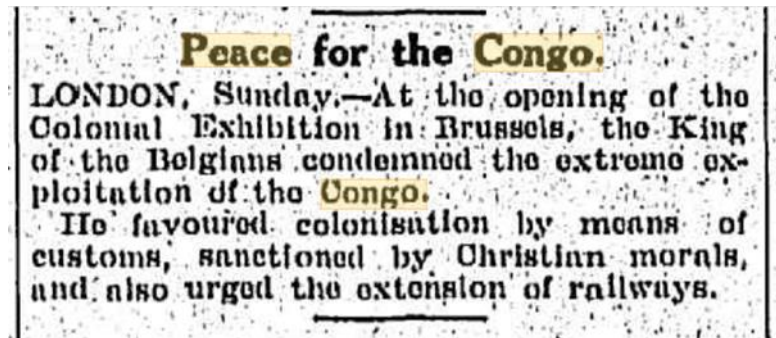
In their declarations we can see that peace and development objectives were justifying colonial ambitions: to suppress the slave trade in Equatorial Africa, to unite the native tribes, to modernize the peoples of the Congo River, to bring morality and an understanding of sin to the natives and to advance the economy of the region (see Stanard, 2012).

For example, one of the main themes that Leopold II used is the fight against the “Arab enslavement”. From 1888, Leopold II launched a call to bring peace to the Congo, by freeing the area from the Arab slave traders. This humanitarian pledge was brought to the Berlin Conference to end slavery (Edgerton, 2002).

a history of mass violence in the Etat Indépendant du Congo, 1885–1908. *South African Historical Journal*, 62(4), 634-670; Viaene, V (2008) "King Leopold's Imperialism and the Origins of the Belgian Colonial Party, 1860–1905" In *The Journal of Modern History*. 80:4, 741-790

³⁵ This separation from Belgium to Congo remained a dominant feature in the colonial setting. For example Belgians refused entreaties from their allies to use Congolese troops on other fronts because of long-standing fears that exposing Africans to outside elements would weaken colonial control. Belgian had a desperate fear, lasting into the 1950s, that travel to Europe would undermine white prestige by bringing Congolese into contact with poor or less educated whites, or introduce Africans to dangerous ideas such as communism (Fogarty and Jarboe, 2014:31)

Figure 4. Leopold II peace propaganda on Congo.
Source: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 1910.



The war against the Swahili-Arab economic and political power was presented as a Christian anti-slavery crusade to bring peace to the people. The Congo Arab war, fought between 1892 and 1894, gave a strong ideological benefit to the Belgian colonisation: it transformed the fight for Congo into a sacred and moral obligation of King Leopold.

This passage has been widely shown by the exhibition “Notre Congo/Onze Kongo” about Belgian propaganda in Congo, that took place from the 23rd September to the 17th December 2016 in Brussels. In the exhibition, the Belgian propaganda in Congo and the main ideological underpinnings of the propaganda are demonstrated.

By the turn of the 20th century, however, the violence used against the Congolese and a ruthless system of economic exploitation provoked international pressure on the Belgian government that led them to the decision to take official control of the country, moving the Congo from being a personal possession of the King to becoming the “Belgian Congo” in 1908.

Belgium administered the Congo as a colony until independence in 1960. In Figure 4 we see how a newspaper of the time explains that the Colonial Exhibition in Brussels in 1910 was considered a way of promoting colonisation for peace and by means of customs, sanctioned by Christian morals.

One of the main narratives that come with this historical period is the one that shows that the Belgian government had to take over the colony, as “reluctant imperialist” (see Fogarty & Jarboe, 2014). In an editorial of the journal *Round Table*, dated 1960, we read “Belgium was a reluctant colonizer, taking over the Congo from Leopold II's personal rule in 1908 only when it became inevitable” (1960: 39).

This augmented the perception of Belgians as positive, benevolent masters, who had to intervene in the Congo to save it, and therefore were never interested in being a colonial power. This is in part due to the atrocities committed by Leopold II but mostly formed through the steady diffusion of propaganda. Stanard (2012) argued against the long-held belief that Belgians were merely reluctant imperialists and demonstrates that in fact many Belgians readily embraced imperialistic propaganda. Indeed, if we take a closer look at the discourses of the epoch, we see that there is not such a profound separation from the narrative during Leopold rule and the one sustained by Belgian's administration in Congo.

As Bobineau also wrote, the emphasis on the humanitarian aspect reached its height shortly after the death of Leopold II and in the 1910s Belgian historians gradually began to glorify the deceased king in order to justify the purchase of the colony prior to the first stirrings of anti-colonial sentiment in Belgium. Similarly, in Belgian schools, the image of the imperial, but benevolent philanthropist, who had brought civilisation to the Congo, was imparted (De Heusch 2002: 19). This image fulfilled its purpose as it led to the positive conservation of the image of Leopold II, especially by the Belgian state. (Bobineau, 2017)

It is important to note here that the civilising ethos was present during the different phases of colonisation, while at the same time, there has never been a regret communicated for the violence in the Congo Free State period.³⁶ While Belgians continued glorifying Leopold II, the international blame for Belgians crimes in Congo decreased sharply from WWI. Indeed, the massacre of the war and the "Rape of

³⁶ We can see that even in the late 1940, there was a consideration of Leopold II as a hero, and a continuity rather than a discontinuity between the two colonial periods. Indeed, Alber De Vleeschauwer, Belgian Minister of Colonies, declared to the BBC that:

"It might be interesting for you to know how this immense African territory become Belgian and how Belgium executed his civilizing task (oeuvre civilisatrice) and what are the results of around seventy years of occupation. We owe our Congo to the Genius of our great King Leopold II. The great King found the occasion to realize his goal already explicated in 1862: finding for Belgium in this unknown region a population to civilize, to conduct to the progress in all possible way, to give to all Belgium the chance to prove that we also are a colonizing country. [...] The envoys of Leopold II penetrate into Africa, sign treaties with the native chiefs, occupy and pacify the regions. Indeed, he [Leopold II] completely pacified the country, sometimes recurring to arms: especially against the slave driver Arabs, the Madhists, and others. The Belgian military leaders who led these last campaigns for civilization have not all died. What a men, what a heroes! For us, to colonize it is to serve, it is to civilize. We do not regard the Colony as a private property in which the owner can do what he wants following his interests. Colonization means for us "burden of souls": to lead these peoples to every sort of progress." (HAEU, PHS-83: 1-2 author's own translation)

Belgium” transformed the people associated with Leopold II's atrocities into victims – even saviours of civilisation (Fogarty and Jarboe, 2014).

The barbarities suffered by Belgians eclipsed Leopold's violent legacy in central Africa. Belgians were, therefore, portraying themselves as the small innocent state only defending itself with peaceful intentions. The unintended consequences of the civilising mission in Africa, even the deaths of Africans, paled in comparison to the wicked destruction of Louvain and the torture and killing of European women and children. For more than four years the Rape of Belgium was on-going and close to the rest of Europe, making the loss of African life at the hands of Leopold's agents seem very far away, in both time and space. as a legitimate practitioner of the civilising mission (ibid).

However, the “violent Belgian domination” did not stop with Leopold II. For example, in 1918, a decree promoted heavy sanctions for “any disrespectful act or word committed or uttered towards a *European agent* of public authority in his presence” (Young, 1994: 252).

Frequently, public forces were “pacifying areas” during Congolese revolts. This was the case in relation to the Sankuru revolt in 1920– 21 and in the suppression of a Pende revolt in Kwilu in 1931 when Belgians killed more than 400 people. (Fogarty and Jarboe, 2014).

Justified by benevolent means, a whole system of segregation was maintained until decolonisation: Congolese were denied the right of land ownership, were unauthorized to be present in European quarters in the evening, nor view any films not approved by a rigorous censor. Print media were also subject to careful control (ibid.). Not only the segregation worked to separate while colonizer by black colonized, but colonisation also changed the social patterns of pre-colonial Congo in many ways. Mortnesen (2013) argued that the legitimacy of traditional leadership was seriously undermined as the appointment of chiefs by the colonial power eradicated the mandate of the ancestral line linking the clan chief to past leaders. This created tensions with no conflict resolution mechanisms for solving them, because the clan chief no longer held the mandate of authority. Second, colonialism separated the public and the private sphere. The majority of properties came to be held by the colonial power, with only

some redistributed privately in contracts. The end of the communal property decreased the legitimacy of local authorities. Moreover, the growth of private property and the access to favours of the colonisers led to the growth of inequality in power: regional leaders accumulated more wealth and began to rule over those who did not have access to land or to the favours of the colonisers.

The severe gap between society and the state was felt in all areas – politically, socially, historically and ethnically – and caused friction requiring the use of great amounts of violence by the state to enforce its dominance in order to force the people to work involuntarily, to insert a new illegitimate leadership, while not wasting money on health care and acceptable work condition. (Mortnesen, 2013)

From the end of the Second World War until the late 1950s, a more violent system of domination was substituted to the prevalence of a system that was called the "*Pax Belgica*": a system of maintaining the imperial peace in Congo by a mix of paternalism and violence (see CEC, 2003: 39) Belgians hesitated in opening up the old system of ancient paternalism, even when – after the WWII - growing discontent was spreading in the African continent and touched the Congo. The colonial government continued to pursue its old policy of “civilizing by strictly limited stages” (The Round Table, 1960). For instance, no high education was guaranteed to Congolese, and only basic education was admitted for the Congolese, in order to maintain a dominated country that had no pretensions of ambitions or (see Yates, 1981)

The comprehensive paternalism of colonial state ideology is well reflected in a 1946 memorandum by the copper mining corporation, Union Minière du Haut-Katanga:

The coloniser must never lose sight of the fact that the Negroes have the souls of children, souls which mould themselves to the methods of the educator; they watch, listen, feel and imitate. The Europeans must, in all circumstances, show himself as chief without weakness, good-willed without familiarity, active in method and especially just in the punishment of misbehaviour, as in the reward of the good deed.

(Mouttoulle, 1946)

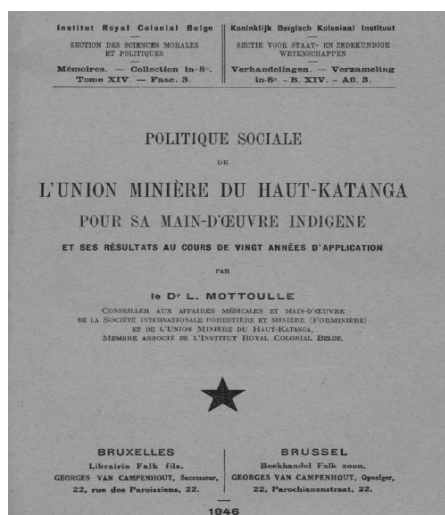


Figure 5. Cover of the memorandum 'Politique Sociale de L'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga pour sa Main-d'œuvre Indigène'(Mouttoulle, 1946)

Belgian propaganda successfully produced a vision of the Congolese as primitive, violent and war-torn, while the Belgians simultaneously defined themselves as advanced, peaceable, and rational. Indeed, the civilising effort (mainly undertaken by the Christian missions) went hand in hand with the colonial private and public exploitation of Congolese resources.

Another important characteristic of Belgian domination was the peculiar colonial power structure, that resulted in an alliance of state, church, and large corporations. This trinity was “not only a virtually seamless web”, writes Crawford Young, “but each component, in its area of activity, was without peer in Africa in the magnitude of its impact” (2015: 10).

This close interconnection between economic development and civilizing mission remained a constant feature until independence. It is in this context that the Governor-General, Pierre Ryckmans, expressing the paternalistic ideology underpinning colonial policy used the expression *dominate to serve* (“*dominer pour servir*”) (Vanderlinden, 1994 and CEC, 2003).

The *Pax Belgica* composed of paternalism and violence remained the driving policy in Congo and colonialists paid no or very little attention to the full emancipation of the Congolese. In an article of *The Time* we can see the description of such paternalistic colonisation:

In the Congo, paternalism means bread but no votes, good government but no opposition; the best Negro housing in Africa but no real freedom of movement. "The emphasis is on economics," says Governor Pétillon.

"The fascination of becoming a skilled worker handling precision machinery drives out of the Negro's mind the need for politics.

(The Time, 1955)

The propagation of a feeling of control and legitimacy seems to have worked such that Van Bilsen's 1955 proposal for the emancipation of the Congo within thirty years became a scandal, many considering the time frame utterly unrealistic (Stanard, 2011:62). Indeed, giving the independence to Congo was often seen in the Belgian propaganda as a way of abandoning the Congolese to their fate. For instance, in 1960 the journal *Round Table*, published an article with the title "The Congolese Vacuum: Independence in a Hurry", stressing that the rushed decolonisation was going to constitute a problem for the Congolese, not being ready to self-governing themselves. In the article we read:

The decision [to give independence to Congo] was a gamble in which the determination to avoid an Algerian situation and to retain African goodwill, and to preserve investments, seems to have outweighed the need to provide the territory with at least some educated local men in the higher branches of the administration and in essential services. The assumption that the Congolese would be content, after independence, to let Belgians stay in all the top posts was both a grave misunderstanding of the nature of African nationalism and a hopeful over-estimate of the maturity of the Congolese political leaders. The gamble was a failure. (1960: 43)

Indeed, Belgians were not ready to let the Congo go. Only two years before the independence, Belgium hosted the Brussels World's Fair. Here, Belgium displayed a Congolese village as the world's last "human zoo" (see Lagae 2007).

The Belgian Congo section's *village indigène* continued a long practice of dehumanizing Africans at universal exhibitions by displaying them in a 'primitive' state to be observed by fair visitors. Belgians buttressed a racialised and primitive image of Congolese, believing that it would have helped to legitimise their presence in the country for a long time. Presenting them as backwards and uncivilised, fencing the around 500 Congolese within the palisade of the fake-village, the Belgians wanted to

show that there was still place for their civilising mission on the African soil. And ultimately, for their role in maintaining the peace in the “dark continent”.

Even in the aftermath of independence, it seems that peace arguments are still vivid in the idea of Belgian intervention in the Congo. For example, in this excerpt found in the JFK Archives about the political crisis in the country after the independence we read:

[...] the intervention of the Belgian metropolitan troops was justified by the total inability of Congolese authorities to ensure respect of fundamental rules which must be observed in any civilized community and by the Belgian Government's sacred duty to take measures required by morality and by public international law.³⁷

(JFK Archives: JFKPOF-114-015)

Belgian Army's intervention in 1961, at the very early start of what has been defined as the Congo Crisis (1960-1965) was justified by their “sacred duty”. Even after decolonisation, Belgians felt morally responsible to act for the Congolese, to allow the respect of moral principles and fundamental rules whose Congolese were not considered as capable of.

Since the independence of Congo, Belgium has not significantly reflected on their role as and memory of being a coloniser, causing some scholars to talk about a “taboo” (Van den Braembussche, 2002). Bonineau (2017) building upon the theoretical framework of the Flemish historian Antoon Van den Braembussche (2002), considered four different strategies that Belgians used to cope with the trauma of losing the Congo and to avoid dealing with the colonial memory:

1. An ideological falsification of history, based on a distortion and denial of historical facts by official institutions or by the representation of some facts as a fictional invention of opponents. In extreme cases, this strategy led to history-distorting consequences in the collective remembrance and also in academic publications.

³⁷ Congo: Analytical chronology, 25 January 1961, available at <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKPOF-114-015.aspx>

2. A cognitive strategy, which is based on a new interpretation of incriminating historical facts, that are constituted by a discrepancy between the current identity and historical knowledge
3. The subconscious repression strategy and simultaneous rejection of historical facts, of which each is based on collective fears and thus may negatively affect a possible identity formation.
4. A mythical strategy, where historical facts are transformed into a myth, an identity-forming, emotionally charged and only partially verifiable narrative of the past.

ii. European Take Over

Prior to Congolese independence, the newly integrated Europe started a series of negotiations to establish a relationship with the Congo.

In December 1956, the Belgian Delegation to the Val Duchesse negotiations drafted a note outlining the position of the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Urundi regarding the possibility of the overseas countries and territories participating in the future European Economic Community (CVCE, 2018)³⁸.

In this negotiation, of course, Congo did not have a say, and Belgians decided their accession to the EEC without consulting Congolese's opinions.

After the Treaty of Rome, dialogues started on how to maintain economic linkages with the Congo in view of creating plausible independence from Belgium.

In a conference in 1959 (figure 6) on Congolese economic development in the framework of the European Common Market, it is possible to retrace the main discourses that emerged in the previous section about the genealogy of the EEC/African relationship. It is, indeed, possible to retrace a presence of the Eurafrikan ideology, an emphasis on the importance of preserving Congolese peace and development with European direct support to Congo and the indirect backing of Belgian rules in the colony.

³⁸ Full document accessible at:
https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/note_on_the_belgian_congo_and_the_proposal_for_a_european_common_market_brussels_december_1956-en-7132f3d0-649e-45df-80f5-bcfcafd8d2d9.html

For instance, we can read that:

“It is a solidarity pact the one that was enacted by signing the Congo’s Association agreement to the European Economic Community. So far, those who work for Congo’s economics and social improvement will find associates not only in Belgium but also in the other countries of the EEC.”
or

“This confrontation is fundamental as the EEC is entering in its first phase of activity in Africa. Relationship of Europe with the young African population is one of the biggest problems nowadays, and we will not save any effort in order to develop all the young African states in peace and prosperity and in order to establish solidarity in Eurafrican relationships”.

(HAEU, LECE-3016: 45-49 author’s own translation)

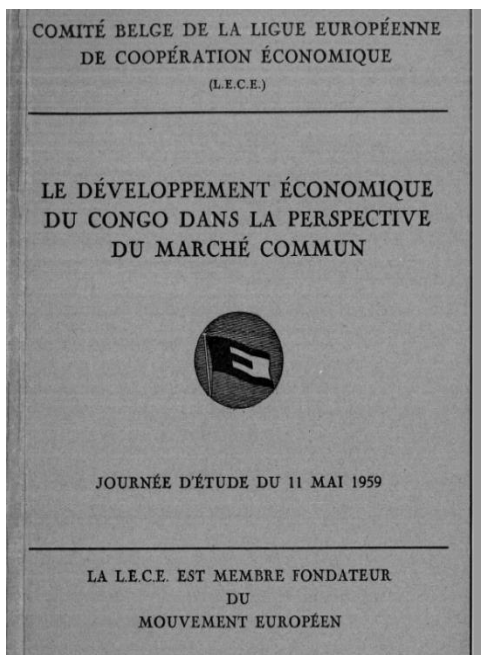


Figure 6. Book cover of the “Journée d’Etude” of Congo’s economic development in ECC common market. Source: HAEU LECE-3016: 45-49.

In these early years of European Integration, in concomitance with the last years of colonial Congo, the EEC found itself in the position of justifying colonialism in the DRC several times. For example, in one extract of the Assembly of the Western European Union we read:

The difficulty of the situation is increased in that the West finds itself in the unbelievable position of having to justify itself. Under accusation from all sides, it is forced to retreat and, its opponents not being satisfied with this, it is pursued in the hope that it will beg for mercy. France has Algeria, Belgium the Congo, the Federal Republic of Germany Berlin and the United States have Cuba as well as their coloured population. Soon everything inherited from the past will be criminal; the West will no longer have to seek a *raison d'etre*, it will no longer exist.

(AEI, 1961)

After decolonisation, the EEC was first and foremost worried about the possible loss of economic interests in DRC, especially in the area of Katanga³⁹. As Young explicitly declared, Europeans were indeed perfectly content with their business in Congo under Belgian management and started being afraid of Lumumba nationalism and the socialist position as a potential threat to European interests in the country. Young considers that these were the major causes that brought European countries not to support the new-elected president and to encourage the fragmentation of the newly independent government. (Young, 1994: 252).

A Parliamentary Commission of 2001 declared that the Belgian government was morally responsible for the circumstances leading to the death of Lumumba, and stated that:

It was hard for the government to justify a laissez-faire attitude regarding the tens of thousands of Europeans in the Congo and it was also worried about the financial and economic losses the Congo crisis could cause. The stakes were high for the European financial groups in the Congo.

(Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry, 2001)

After the assassination of Lumumba, the EEC decided to prioritise its economic interests in Congo and to maintain an apparent apolitical approach, despite evident political pressure in the country due to Mobutu's *coup d'état* and the assumption of personal control of the country.

³⁹ For an analysis on the European interests in Congo in the time of decolonisation see: Kent, 2015 & 2017 and O'Malley, 2018.

Indeed, the European approach to Congo was following the general approach explained in the previous chapter: With the idea of not being mistaken for a neo-colonial actor, the moral responsibility of the EEC towards Congo was projected in the economic sphere of development, limiting itself to assistance and development programs, while not interfering in the internal affairs of the country.

As it has been explained in the previous chapter, non-interference did not mean a whole rethink of the importance of Congolese's self-determination.

Even in the technical jargon of the EDF that followed in the decades after the independence, the rhetoric of moral duty to help Congolese, their incapacity and backwardness was part of the lexicon, and of the justification of development policies.

Moreover, many architects of such development plans were former Belgian Ministers of Colonies employed in the new DG VIII, the development department inside the EC.

Exemplary in this sense was the influence of the former Minister of colonies, Pierre Wigny, who sensibly contributed to the creation of the ECC and in particular to the construction of development plans in DRC (see HAEU, INT 095). In this sense, the research done by Veronique Dimier on the "recycling" of French colonial ministers in DG VIII could be applied also to the Congolese case.

3.2. The EU's Involvement in Conflict Resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo

As it has been explained in the previous chapter, when referring to the EU-Africa relationship, the EU's interest in African peace and conflict began to regain importance at the end of the 1980s.

Peace and conflict turn into the centre of interest with the tragedy of Rwanda and the accelerator of the bloody 'war of liberation' (1996-1997) and the 'Congo War' (1998-2002) that ravaged the Democratic Republic of Congo⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ The Congo crises are rooted in a complex interplay of local, national and regional dynamics. Centuries of exploitation and colonialism, followed by decades of patrimonial rule and economic mismanagement caused a deep political crisis and the near collapse of the Mobutu regime. In the eastern parts of the country, unresolved local issues of citizenship and land access added additional layers to the crisis and triggered a first round of armed mobilisation. A mass exodus into the DRC (then

It is in these circumstances that the EU started associating the discourse of peace and human rights to that of development. In that period, the two trends indicated in the previous chapter are merged: a progressive interference in the DRC peace issue and a contemporary affirmation of the importance of its ownership of peace decisions.

Since then, the EU has strived to pursue a comprehensive approach to the crisis in the DRC and has tried to be a dominant peace and security agent in the Democratic Republic of Congo. (see Autesserre, 2010; Davis, 2015; Eriksen, 2009; Froitzheim, Söderbaum & Taylor, 2011; Gegout, 2005; Hoebeke, Carette, & Vlassenroot, 2007; Martin, 2007; Youngs, 2006).

In DRC, all EU's crisis management and conflict prevention instruments have been engaged at one time or another. This has made some observers consider that the DRC has proven something of a test case for the EU development of peacebuilding instruments and that this conflict has become 'a laboratory for EU crisis management' (Knutsen, 2009: 456).

Indeed, the EU deployed a multiplicity of civilian capabilities and tested its new military dimension of the evolving European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). This combination of civilian and military approach, allowed the EU to maintain the discourse of 'civilian power', permitting the EU to present these new capabilities as a 'holistic' approach to security. In DRC, the EU wanted to show its equilibrium between the 'soft' and 'hard' components of the embryonic European security policy (Rathje, 2007) and using its outcome as 'lessons learnt' in the field of crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding, that would have allowed the EU to improve its action (ibid.).

In the early 90s', a consequence of the introduction of the human right clause in the Lomé Convention, the EU decided to suspend the cooperation with the DRC from 1992 to 2002 justifying it for the lack of progress in the political democratisation

called Zaire) of Burundian and Rwandan Hutu refugees as a result of the Burundian civil war in 1993 and the Rwandan genocide, intensified instability in eastern Congo. In 1996, the presence of the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR) and militias in these refugee camps and of Ugandan rebel movements in the DRC triggered an armed intervention of neighboring countries Uganda and Rwanda and the creation of a regional coalition. This coalition ousted Mobutu from power in May 1997. After the new Congolese president Kabila expelled his former Ugandan and Rwandan military allies in 1998, a second war broke out which would soon result in a high level of military fragmentation in the east. (Arnould & Vlassenroot, 2016). For a comprehensive history of Congo see: Gondola, C. D. (2002). *The history of Congo*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

process, the high degree of corruption, economic mismanagement and differences between EU Member States' policies towards the country. During this period, the EU maintained an active presence through humanitarian aid funded by DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

From 1996 to 2011, there was an EU Special Envoy (later, Special Representative or EUSR) for the Great Lakes region. Aldo Ajello and his successor, Roeland van de Geer, were both active in peace negotiations in the region.

In 2002, a fundamental breakthrough was reached in the Congolese peace process and the peace negotiation efforts resulted in the Pretoria All Inclusive Political Agreement signed on 17 December 2002 between the different Congolese warring factions and political actors. When the global accord brought the conflicts to a formal end and established a transitional government to guide in the Third Republic, the EU resumed its development cooperation fund to support the reconstruction of the country.

Further negotiations based on the Pretoria agreement paved the way for the “transition period”, which took off on 30 June 2003. Following this, a transitional government was installed that was based on power sharing between the main warring parties. This government faced the arduous task of unifying the national territory, establishing a new legal and institutional framework, rebuilding state authority, preparing for general elections, and reforming the security sector. Several internationally supported initiatives were set up to support the peace process and promote regional stability (Hoebeke, Carette, & Vlassenroot, 2007).

Most notably, an International Committee to facilitate the transition period, the “*Comité international de l'accompagnement de la transition*” (CIAT), was created with the objective of assisting and supervising the transition process and the transitional government. The CIAT comprised representatives in the DRC of the five permanent members of the Security Council as well as Angola, Belgium, Canada, Gabon, South Africa, Zambia, the European Union, and MONUC.

Despite being considered only as an “accompanying” organ, CIAT managed to occupy an important political position and this created tension with the transitional government who became increasingly sensitive to issues related to its sovereignty (Hoebeke, Carette, & Vlassenroot, 2007). The CIAT period has been compared to a

protectorate by some observers (see De Goede & Van Der Borgh, 2008 and Rayroux & Wilén, 2014).

The EU gave financial support for the constitutional referendum in 2005, that marked the end of the CIAT period and the arrival of the new government. Although CIAT ended, tensions between the government and the EU have continued regarding questions of sovereignty and ownership (see De Goede, 2012).

The EU has also mobilised its resources to support the electoral processes in 2006 and 2011, through funding support for the organisation and security of the elections and by deploying substantial election observation missions (see EC, 2008 and 2013).

Since 2003, the EU mobilized also the military instrument, along with the civilian ones, deploying the first CSDP intervention outside of Europe and setting important precedents for the development of future EU engagements in Africa.

Overall five different CSDP interventions have been undertaken since 2003, mainly focusing on supporting security sector reform in the DRC: ARTEMIS⁴¹, EUFOR DR Congo⁴², EUPOLKinshasa and EUPOL DR Congo⁴³, EUSEC DR Congo⁴⁴. The EU

⁴¹ EU ARTEMIS was the EU's first ever CSDP mission outside of its immediate neighborhood. It was deployed from 12 June to 1 September 2013 in Bunia. Its mandate was to contribute to the stabilisation of security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia, as well as to protect Bunia airport, IDP camps and, if necessary, civilian populations and UN and humanitarian personnel (UN resolution 1484). After 1 September, Artemis was relieved by the newly reinforced UN Ituri brigade.

⁴² In 2006, the EU deployed a second military mission, EUFOR DR Congo, from 12 June to 30 November. Its mandate was to assist the Congolese police and army and the UN mission (MONUC) in securing the elections. Its role was to support the UN 'in case MONUC faces serious difficulties in fulfilling its mandate', secure Kinshasa airport, contribute to the protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, and to carry out evacuation operations (UN resolution 1671). In contrast to Artemis, which was fully deployed in theatre, EUFOR DR Congo only had a small advance force deployed on the ground in Kinshasa.

⁴³ The two EUPOL missions were aimed at strengthening the Congolese police forces. EUPOL Kinshasa, in operation from April 2005 to December 2006, was established to provide support to the newly created Integrated Police Unit that was tasked with securing the transition institutions and the elections. In addition, the mission provided assistance for the organisation of a census of the national police (Police Nationale Congolaise, PNC) and for training provisions. It was followed by the EUPOL DR Congo mission, in operation from July 2007 to December 2014, which was given a broader mandate to support the police reform process through the delivery of training and assistance in the conceptualisation of the police reform process.

⁴⁴ EUSEC DR Congo was set up in June 2005 to provide advice and assistance to the Congolese authorities responsible for security sector reform. While its initial mandate was to support the army integration process (the 2003 peace agreement provided for the constitution of a new national army through the integration of combatants from the rebel groups into the Kabila loyalist army), EUSEC's key contributions have been the creation of a new chain of payment to reduce embezzlement of soldier's salaries, the modernisation of military administration and human resource management, and the rehabilitation of armories.

has recently phased out the EUSEC mission and its work has continued through a project funded by the European Development Fund.

All these missions make the DRC the recipient of the largest number of EU CSDP missions in one single country.

Furthermore, the EU supports UN resolution 2211 concerning the renewal of the mandate of the UN mission, MONUSCO and in 2013 was international partners of the Peace Security and Cooperation framework. This is an agreement that contains specific commitments on the part of the DRC, regional countries and the international community.

EU's engagement in reconstruction has been focused on different areas as the reconstruction of the health sector, infrastructure rehabilitation, and improved governance or 'politico-institutional reconstruction' (through support for the transition process, the reinforcement of state institutions, the justice and security sectors, public finances, and the decentralisation process).

Moreover, the EU has mobilized a variety of development, democracy promotion, and humanitarian assistance instruments in support of its conflict management and stabilisation objectives in the DRC. For example, through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the EU has furthermore supported projects, implemented by civil society partners, to promote the rule of law, human rights protections, and political participation. Projects have included support for torture victims, independent local media, civic education, citizen participation in local governance, and the fight against impunity (EIDHR, 2011).

As a response to the long emergency situation in the DRC, the also EU disbursed extensive direct humanitarian assistance. This assistance has been primarily geared towards support for Internally Displaced Persons and refugees (including refugees from neighbouring countries), and responding to acute malnutrition crises and epidemics throughout the country. The EU also operates a humanitarian air service, ECHO Flight, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to remote areas where road infrastructures are either unavailable or unsafe.

EU's financial and political engagement in the DRC has grown exponentially every year. To give an example, between 2002 and 2013, European Development Fund (EDF) budgets increased from €120 million to €726 million (€901 million if thematic budget lines such as the Stability Fund, Food Facility, and environment are also included) (EC, 2013). The envelope for 2014-2020 (11th EDF) package is one of the largest in the world (EEAS, 2018). Besides this, funds come also through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In July 2017, an additional €5 million was released for emergency aid to victims of violence in the conflict (ibid.)

Finally, the EU sustains a political dialogue, which allows the EU and the DRC to discuss subjects of shared interest, in particular, the preservation of political space and respect for human rights.

However, despite the EU and international assistance, conflict and political violence persist, above all in eastern DRC ⁴⁵.

According to Stearns and Vogel (2015) different approaches to stabilisation and peace of the Congolese government and the international community, including demobilisation, security sector and institutional reform, have had meagre results.

While EU policies in the DRC have played a significant role in testing and developing the EU's crisis management capabilities, some authors consider its positive contribution to improving conditions on the ground in the DRC to be less evident (Piccolino, 2010).

⁴⁵ Whilst a large number of militia combatants were either demobilized or integrated in the newly created Congolese army, their departure from their strongholds in many areas created a security void, whereas other groups resisted reintegration and remained operational in their previous areas of control. The slow pace of the integration process, the lack of attention to local unresolved land-access disputes, the citizenship issue, military or economic influence, competition over the control of mineral exploitation and trading networks, the nature of the state and the lack of progress in political reform and decentralisation, and regional power politics all explain the continued violence in the Kivu provinces after the start of the transition process. (Arnould & Vlassenroot, 2016).

Such violence has taken place mainly in the Kivu and Ituri provinces that have been the scene of fighting for over two decades. More violent clashes also erupted in the last years between in the Bukavu and Gatumba, Tanganyika, Kanyabayonga and Kasai region. Despite the fact that formal elections should have taken place in 2016, President Kabila announced that they would be pushed back to late 2018. In the last two years, since conflict erupted in August 2016 in the previously peaceful Kasai region, there has been a sharp increase in the number of internally displaced people across the country, continuing violence and political tensions.

Even more, peace efforts have generally been an additional opportunity to revive or reinforce existing armed structures, and have set in motion new claims to political, military, and economic power (Arnould & Vlassenroot, 2016). Badly designed strategies to deal with armed groups have even added new layers of conflict, as ‘the strategy of power-sharing and institution building in the DRC has slowly but steadily become constitutive of a dialectic of structural violence and privatized governance that forms an essential impediment to genuine change’ (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2009: 484).

Criticism of EU peacebuilding has been widely discussed by African authors (see for example Abbas and Ndeda, 2009; Baregu, 2011; Ndiaye, 2009; Zondi, 2017). Between September 2007 and February 2008, Kibasomba and Lombe carried out a field survey on local initiative and perception on conflict resolution in Kivu, published in the *Journal of International Development*. The findings shows that people in South and North Kivu perceive the that international actors had the same responsibility for obstructing peace in DRC than neighbouring countries (Rwanda), scoring at the highest level of responsibility (around 20%) whereas the DRC government and politicians score at the 10% of responsibility and the FARDC only at the 5% (Kibasomba & Lombe, 2008). This perspective is quite different from to the EU’s understanding of the major conflict causes and obstacles to peace in Eastern DRC. Copious African literature agrees with the fact that EU approaches fail to be successful because its main assumptions about DRC are fallacious. For instance, Bussy and Gallo argue that peacebuilding instruments in the DRC are based on the assumption that the lack of a strong liberal state is the primary reason why conflict persists in the area, and that the source of this assumption lies in the dominant view of international relations since the Enlightenment, the foundation of the Westphalian state system, and the evolution of the liberal peace paradigm that followed. In contrast, they argue that this kind of peacebuilding will only lead to top-down approaches that are not shared by Congolese community organisations and local NGOs.

Several examples can serve this point. For example, whereas several African anthropologists and historians contend that the conflict in the Great Lakes can be explained by the political manipulation of ethnic mythology, specifically the ethnic or

pseudo-racial distinctions between “Bantu” and “Nilotic” peoples (see Malkki, 1995; Karbo & Mutisi, 2012), the EU has not been really engaged in working on this aspect.

Beyond the singular case of the EU, Autesserre argues that international peacebuilding actors in the DRC tend to appropriate three narratives on the reason and solution of the conflict and eclipse the numerous alternative framings of the situation (2012). These narratives focus on a primary cause of violence: illegal exploitation of mineral resources; with the main consequence being sexual abuse of women and girls; and a central solution, that is the same above mentioned by Bussy and Gallo, extending state authority. Such simple narratives are necessary as they provide straightforward explanations for the violence, suggest possible solutions to it, and are easily understandable by foreign audiences. Autesserre demonstrates that the focus on these narratives shows the divergence between peacebuilders and local approaches. Many other authors consider the gap between the EU and the local vision on peacebuilding (see for instance Autesserre, 2010 and 2012; Bussy & Gallo, 2016; Froitzheim, 2011; Murithi, 2007; Trefon, 2004; Wilen, 2014).

In this context, seems very appropriate to refer to the metaphor created by Rutazibwa (2010) of an “intervener-centric mechanism” to explain the EU’s ethical foreign policy ambitions, or to what Froitzheim, Söderbaum and Taylor consider the major limitations of the EU’s role as a peace and security actor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: the fact that the EU is more concerned with establishing a symbolic presence and a form of representation than with achieving specific goals (2012).

In this sense, she explains that the European well-intended involvement is more about a way to be meaningful and act abroad rather than to make an actual impact on the country. Thus, EU’s massive involvement in DRC conflict resolution seems more about a way for the EU to remain engaged in the country, while testing its technical instruments, rather an effective strategy that proved to obtain results in the last twenty years of EU peacebuilding.

Conclusion

This chapter is built on the premise of the previous one, in which we saw the evolving narrative of Europeans bringing peace to Africa. In this sense, it discussed the meaning of peacebuilding as an institutionalised tool in international interventions and moved to the specific framework of EU peacebuilding. Here the emphasis was put on the distinctiveness of the EU's approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution and on the "normative aspects" that underpins its peace approach.

It then moved to the analysis of the EU peacebuilding approach to the Democratic Republic of Congo. While doing so, it firstly provided a historical overview of Belgian "peace promotion" in Congo before decolonisation, and how the European project took over the development and peace policies for the country. Finally, it shows the EU's involvement in conflict resolution and the instruments that have been deployed.

This chapter is particularly relevant to serve as a context for the last two empirical chapters because it presented all of the EU's peacebuilding policies towards DRC that will be the object of the next part. The two following chapters are dedicated to the EU peacebuilding policies in DRC, and more specifically to the analysis of discourses by peacebuilding policymakers in Brussels. Indeed, in the next two chapters, the EU peacebuilding framework analysed here will be put under the critical lens of postcolonial analysis.

Therefore, the analysis turns to the discourse portrayed by EU officials who are in charge of making the peacebuilding policies discussed in this chapter and shows where there are continuities with the colonial discourse.

Chapter Six

The Colonial Question in EU Peacebuilding Policymaking

*The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility;
the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.*
(Trouillot, 2015)

Introduction

Charbonneau asserted that the colonial legacy in peacebuilding scholarship is rejected a priori as totally irrelevant or it is simply assumed, thus leading to questionable straightforward comparisons between colonial violence and current peace operations (2014).

In the following last two empirical chapters, it is my intention to move away from both trends and locate my enquiry in the middle of these two streams. Indeed, it is my concern to give space to the inherent and historical power relations at work between peacebuilders and recipients, but at the same time not simply assuming a legacy of colonialism in EU peacebuilding, which could generate the risk of falling into hasty generalisations.

In so doing, chapter six and chapter seven are devoted to the examination of EU policymakers' speeches and actions concerning the creation of peacebuilding policies, in order to understand the extent of colonial legacies in this sphere.

Specifically, this chapter focuses on the ways in which discourse on the influence of colonial past in EU's peacebuilding in DRC operates within the standpoints of EU's institutional representatives and individual civil servants of the Commission and the European External Action Service.

Thereby, the focus in this chapter is unpacking how the colonial legacy in DRC is taken into consideration by the EU peacebuilding practitioners. By doing so, this empirical chapter seeks to consider whether EU peacebuilding practitioners incorporate reflections on the EU's colonial past while working on peacebuilding policies in DRC.

By doing so, the chapter seeks to elaborate on the different perspectives gathered in the interviews and reflects on the main discourses that emerged around the inclusion/exclusion of colonial memory in peacebuilding policy making,

In so doing, this chapter looks at the body of statements gathered, to trace what are the discursive representations on the EU's colonial legacy in peacebuilding. In other words, the chapters look at the discursive strands that might compose the broader colonial discourse.

Indeed, the body of statements is tied together in what is called a discourse strand, best explained as thematically interrelated sequences of homogeneous “discourse fragments” (Jager and Maier, 2009).

The empirical analysis of the interviews and documents about the inclusion/exclusion of colonial memory in EU peacebuilding policymaking in DRC allows illuminating two mayor discursive strands.

The first discursive strand is about the “colonial erasure”, which identify the disinterest and obliviousness of the European colonial history in EU peacebuilding policymaking.

The second one – only apparently contradictory – illustrates the positive legacy of colonialism, focusing on the importance attributed to the former colonial ties for successful peacebuilding policies and in particular on the Belgian role in EU peacebuilding policymaking towards DRC.

The study considers such discursive strands not as homogeneous structures of thoughts, but rather as part of a system of discourse that contains as discursive instability (see chapter two). Drawing on the postcolonial conception of the instability of colonial discourse (Bhabha, 1994, among others), the study sees discursive strands

not as a unifying and monolithic idea, but as unstable formations that regulate the different representations of the same discourse.

It is thanks to the ambivalence of the colonial discourses that the “structure of power” can be consolidated. Indeed, such instability allows different -and apparently contradictory- stereotypes or ideological justifications to be mobilised in order to assert and legitimise domination. As Kapoor puts it, the discursive structure does not need to be homogeneous in order to be hegemonic. On the contrary, it gets reinforced from being ambivalent (Kapoor, 2003).

Thus, embracing this instability, allows us to understand how different stream of discourses is functional to the reproduction of a “regime of truth” in peacebuilding.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two main parts, dedicated to the two main discursive strands highlighted. The first touches on the erasure of the colonial issue with respect to planning, drafting and implementing peace-related policies in DRC. The second pinpoints the important role that Belgium, the former coloniser, assumes in every EU officials’ discourse on peacebuilding in DRC, with a discourse that tends to exalt the positive legacy of colonialism.

By unfolding and putting those two discursive strands in communication the aim of this chapter is to reflect on their contradictions and limitations. A final conclusion reflects and summarises the main findings.

1. The Erasure of Colonial Memory

1.1. Facing the Colonial Taboo

In the first and third chapter, it has been explained how EU Studies, as a disciplinary field, has evolved around “colonial amnesia”. In the first chapter, this amnesia has been associated with the specific nature of the EU Studies discipline (born as a subfield of IR) and by the specific profile of EU Studies’ scholars (who often were also EU practitioners). It also illuminates on the effort of a number of contemporary scholars that have started to challenge this historical erasion.

Moreover, in chapter three the colonial amnesia has been put in relation to the interest in forging a narrative about the EU as a new entity separated by the member’ states past.

However, in the same chapter, it has also been explained that the European Parliament is engaged in the reconsideration of colonialism as part of European shared past and in this effort, it opened the “House of the European History” (HEH). In this Museum of European History, colonialism is seen as a European global phenomenon to be taken into account in our common present.

In this chapter, we can see that the EP effort in bringing to the surface the colonial legacy has not been perceived by the EU peacebuilding practitioners and that the colonial amnesia plays a central role in the EU peacebuilding policymaking.

Since the very start of the data gathering in the European institutions, I realised that a completely different understanding of European collective history was conceived by the people working in peacebuilding (EEAS, DEVCO, ECHO, Council).

The top-down forging of a common European history by the Parliament, symbolised by the construction of the HEH, was not reflected in the practitioners’ understanding, and the idea of colonialism as shared European phenomenon put forward by the EP has not been transferred at all in the other bodies of the EU.

This different approach, among the EP and the Commission on this particular point, results therefore in a very different perception of history. It is an order of discourse based on an absence of colonial history.

This absence was first of all manifested in the attitude of my interviewees.

It happened quite often that while asking questions about EU colonial legacy, the role of Belgium within EU peacebuilding in DRC or the relevance of history in the current peacebuilding procedures, most of my interviewees became upset, and they did not deny being also annoyed by my questions.

Such defensive attitudes seemed to generate by the fact that my interviewees were asked to talk about a taboo, or as if they felt accused in the first person by my questions. Comments by an officer exemplify this clearly:

We are loyal: we come to the office, we obey orders of our “Heads”, we do our job. I do not think that there is something wrong with that. We work to tackle present emergencies and we look at the future in the view of a better Africa. I do not see the point in looking back at the past. That would only make us feel guilty and uncomfortable. I mean, here we do a lot to help the Great Lake Region emerging, and I do not believe that any accusation of hiding colonial ambitions -or whatever you are referring - could help our Division to perform better.

(Int.2)

Others were giving me very sarcastic answers, meant at showing their underestimation and disinterest of my research topic:

Congolese drink a lot of beer. That is the negative effect of Belgian colonization of Congo, in my view.

(Int.3)

or

“You are talking about a ‘fantôme’ that does not exist but that could scare our team and damage the dialogue with our African partners. Think about that.”

(Int.4)

This reluctance and defensive posture that sometimes was difficult to sustain was hence very meaningful for my study. It implied that, besides their formal disinterest or diminishing of the matter, the interviewees were not feeling comfortable discussing this topic.

This taboo is regulated by a specific discursive strand that is built on an absence: the EU’s history does not include the nation-state’s past, and therefore it is considered to be absolved from colonialism and any reflection on colonial legacies.

The basis of thus taboo can be retraced indeed in the first discursive strand about colonial discourse in EU peacebuilding policymaking: the oblivion of the colonial history.

Such discursive strand is supported and constructed around two nodal points, or ‘privileged signs’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 (1985)) that articulates the meaning and organises the elements of this discursive strand. Those are the separation between the EU and its member states’ past and the ‘presentist regime’.

1.2. The Separation between the EU and Member States’ Past

While talking about the HEH, and the Parliament effort to include colonial history in this Museum of European History, most of the practitioners that I interviewed declared that they were not even aware of the imminent opening of the HEH. What is more, others also rejected the very idea of “European” history altogether, stressing the difference among the Member States more than the similarities and the common historical grounds. European history is therefore considered as the history of European integration.

No, I never heard about this project [construction of the HEH]. Sometimes communication among us is not so fluid as it should be and there are so

many initiatives that I cannot recall all of them. Anyhow, the challenge of recollecting the history of Europe it is a noble task, I think in this sense the European Parliament is right in pursuing such interest, but what do you mean for the history of Europe? That is my question.

(Int. 5)

The separation between member states and the EU's history in the minds of my interviewees assumes a stronger connotation when dealing with such a sensitive issue as colonialism.

Indeed, if the very idea of a European collective memory was considered problematic, the concept of a European colonial shared past was even more contested. As we will see in the course of this chapter, the idea of colonialism as a shared European phenomenon suggested by the EP is almost rejected in the other bodies of the EU.

The general perception in the departments and units interviewed was the rejection of any correlation between the EU and colonialism. Some of the EU personnel interviewed genuinely confessed that they had never thought about this, for example, admitting that:

Honestly, it never came up in my mind. Well, now that you are asking me I remember that a network of Civil Society Organizations identified several recommendations for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, among which one was about the negative impact of former colonial powers, but this debate never really entered among these walls. Frankly speaking, I do not think it is relevant. At least as far as it concerns us [Transitional Justice and Human Right Department].

(Int.6)

Are you asking me how people in Kinshasa perceive the EU? If we are responsible for their colonial past? But we [speaking also for her colleague, present in the interview] don't know about this. We are inside the machine and it is not our task to raise such questions.

(Int.7)

These two interviewees are from different sectors of EU peacebuilding: the former working in transitional justice in the DRC within the Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation Division of the EEAS, and the latter in charge of projects funded under the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace at the EU Delegation in Kinshasa. However, both of them frame the issue as it were not their personal responsibility to think about the historical role of the institution in which they work and the repercussion of this in their daily work. They both answer to the question as individuals, rather than showing the perspective of the EU as a whole.

Other EU personnel interviewed believe that the EU has nothing to do with the colonial past of its member states, and therefore that there are no repercussions on EU peacebuilding missions and instruments. Often, the tone of interviewees was irritated and not giving space for further questions.

Why should the EU be responsible for something that happened when the EU did not even exist? Of course, from the member state still exist a sort of responsibility, I come from the UK and, I would say, it is clear there is - I don't know if it is a sense of guilt or sense of responsibility. I am aware that there is a particular desire to stick with the former colonies. But I really do not see the link with the EU.

(Int.8)

This is a very empty debate to me. There is no relevance of colonialism in the CSDP or in the general EU-Africa relationship. Colonialism is a national issue. In this department, we perform quite well and certainly, our credibility in crisis management is not undermined by the past of certain member states.

(Int.9)

Such findings are demonstrating that the question of colonialism is still to be addressed within the EU institutions. Moreover, in these statements, it is interesting to notice how prominently the separation between the EU and its member states is portrayed.

The EU seems to be considered a sort of artificial entity; an amalgamation of the member states that only consider 'common' their present pre-occupations and the kind

of history that is functional to EU goals. This corresponds to what Bickerton (2012) noted about the incapacity of the EU to conceptualise the Nation States as part of its history, but rather to always see a divide between national sovereignty and EU supra-nationalism. And that is how the interviewees reflected on this issue:

We cannot make a generalization, member states' history is not European History. You are talking about colonialism, and this is a good example: Member states in their past had colonies, but Europe never had.
(Int.10)

I do not understand: what do you mean by colonial legacies? The EU was not even existing in the colonial epoch. How can we carry a heritage of others?

(Int. 11)

Again, the interviewees are associating European history only with the history of European integration and leaving aside all that happened before.

Another excerpt, confirms this vision:

The EU never had a colony. Our member states had. And the EU has nothing to do with the member states colonial past. I mean if you look at the origin of the Cotonou Agreement, that was Lomé, of course, it was created because a certain past, it was a post-colonial era. But we have moved beyond that. We are far beyond that. When you look at the reality you see some of our member states to be more active when dealing with peace and security in Africa, but this is because they have more extensive experience in the field, so there are many factors. They don't do out of a former coloniser perspective, but because they have strong traditional ties, their knowledge of Africa, and their military expertise and experience in those places.

(Int. 12)

The discursive instability that results from this is evident: on the one hand, every link between the EU and a colonial past is considered absurd, even if it is accepted that the Yaoundé Agreements and the Lomé Conventions between the EU and the former colonial world were the results of the post-colonial spirit. On the other hand, the current linkage between member states and former colonies in EU peace and security actions in the African continent is considered the result of cultural and traditional proximity. However, if we accept the presence and the effect of these cultural bonds inherited by colonial times, we cannot deny the existence of a correlation between the EU and colonialism.

i. They Don't Come Here with their Histories: Beyond the EU as a Unified Entity

The separation between Member States' history and EU plays a fundamental role in the construct the discursive strand of the erasure of colonial question in EU peacebuilding policymaking. This nodal point is also reflected in the discursive variations between the EEAS and the EC's perception of history.

While conducting interviews I was particularly cautious about understanding the background of my interviewees, in order to understand if there might be a difference of outcomes among officials of different EU bodies, or according to their country of origin and their professional background.

Indeed, these dividing lines allow us to reflect beyond the idea of the 'EU as an entity' and allow for the understanding that political and institutional dynamics also shape the outcome of the EU's policy. As Jeandesboz (2007) presented in the case of the European Neighbourhood Policy, a variety of discursive strategies and the struggles among differentially positioned agents of the European bureaucracies can in general play a substantial role in defining the EU policies outcomes and therefore delineate a certain 'specificity' of the EU's structure. In particular, for the case of EU's approach to security in Africa, the difference between the "rhetoric from Brussels and reality on the ground" (Vines, 2010: 1091) is well known.

The first point to be addressed was that concerning discursive variations between officials from the Commissions and from the EEAS. As discussed in previous

chapters, peacebuilding policies are performed mainly in these two bodies, but I wanted to understand if the different components of the two institutions generated a difference in the interpretation of EU's colonial history.

Indeed, although their statements present a number of similarities, I was able to identify that the Commission and the EEAS do not consider the question of colonialism and the colonial past in exactly the same terms.

In the Commission there is a sense of normative commitment: there is the strong idea of the EC as a "*super partes*" body, a neutral power in which the national interests are not playing a major role as in the EEAS. This might be influenced by decades in which the EU wanted to be perceived as a neutral force that acted beyond the strategic interest of member states, following what was generally considered its normative and civilian power in foreign policy.

In the Commission, most of the officers interviewed consider that they belong to an institution where old colonial times are not relevant because the EU as a supranational organism does not reflect member state particularities, and therefore their single histories.

Frequently, this neutrality is opposed to the interest-driven composition of the EEAS, where the member states have much more relevance. The Deputy Head of the Africa-EU Partnership in the Peace Facility Unit problematized the existence of Member States driven peacebuilding policy within the EEAS, arguing:

I think we definitely moved from the time of responsibility for colonial damages. However, this never really concerned about the EU. The EU never had anything to be responsible for. Of course in the EEAS Member States are really important, therefore they concur in creating the peace agenda. But here [in the Commission] you can see there is no relevance of member states, so they don't come here with their histories.

(Int. 13)

He is indeed making the point that the Commission is a space freed of the weight of colonialism by opposing it to the EEAS, that is associated with the Member States.

This consideration was also shared by others interviewees from the European Commission and poses interesting questions regarding the use of the history of member states which has perhaps not seriously been considered by the literature so far.

Indeed, the narrative of the separation between EU and the member states past stands – although precariously- as far as peacebuilding decisions are taken by independent organs, not merged with member states interests and ambitions.

However, in chapter three it was shown that the EU, as an institution, is not a neutral space, but is the result of the consolidation of Europe as a dominant subject that is the heir of the former European empires.

Furthermore, in chapter three of this thesis, recent literature was mobilized to argue that during European integration colonialism was never put under question but, on the contrary, the European Community “recycled” the colonial relationships of its member states and constructed its foreign policy on such colonial basis.

Through original material found in the Historical Archives of the European Union, it was also demonstrated in Chapter five that this was the case in relation to the Congo.

The implications are that we cannot consider the European Commission as a neutral space, even if it is not directly linked to the specific Member States (as is the case with the EEAS).

Indeed, the EU agency carries a subjective identity influenced by its colonial past. In the EEAS, a contrasting perspective is in evidence. Frequently, the interviewees consider the External Action Service of the EU mainly as an empty box, filled by member states interests.

I am not sure that the EU can change the pursuit of member states' interest. We [the EEAS] are nothing else than the sum of the member states. The foreign policy is driven by the member states. And of course, the Member States have interests.

(Int.14)

All I can say is that every member state has power and leverages, and in the EEAS more than in the Commission itself we can see that we feel such power and leverages. In COAFR this emerges clearly. Belgians are a very important part of life in DRC. Clearly, DRC is almost the number one foreign policy strategic objective of Belgium, and that has an impact on our work. This is true. But I don't see any correlation between the EU itself and colonialism.

(Int. 15)

The discursive separation between EU and member states' past is therefore mirrored in variations between EC and EEAS conception of history. Indeed, - as these two statements, it is highlighted- the EEAS, is considered a place where Member States' interest plays an important role, and the EC, which –as we say before-is conceived as a neutral space.

However, even admitting the importance of Member States' interest within EEAS, there is no room to reflect about the weight of their historical past, and therefore ultimately no correlation between their colonial past and the EU.

Even if member states are considered relevant in the creation of EU's external action, and their interests are the main driving force of EU external policies, the historical colonial past of such member states is not considered relevant when analysing the EU.

However, if –according to the general view of my interviewees - the EEAS is just the sum of Member States' interests in foreign policy, why is it so absurd to reflect on the influence of Member States' past in EU policies? The EEAS is partly composed of countries representatives, but not by their histories.

This point leads me to a second important question: is the country of origin of the interviewees influencing the view about colonial memory and legacy in the EU? Are there any differences in the set of statements collected based on the Officers' background? Is the colonial amnesia shared indistinctly by EU officers, despite their country of origin?

The task here is to understand the extent to which different historical colonial pasts of member states impact on the discursive representations of individual officials working on peacebuilding. As it has been widely expressed in chapter 3, EU member states have a different colonial past, and therefore officers' different personal historical backgrounds could lead to different opinions about colonial legacies in peacebuilding.

For example, the difference of Member States's interests in peacebuilding is extremely evident in the daily policymaking business. In the case of DRC, Belgium is the constant partner to consult and it is the representative with the strongest voice within COAFR when discussing choices on DRC. In the interviews, Officials from Belgium were more keen on talking about themselves as Belgians rather than as EU Officials, thus portraying that the nationality influenced the perception of the subject, and this is also the case of several officials from France and United Kingdom.

However, in the interviews gathered it is possible to perceive that when reflecting on the European legacy of colonialism, there was a generally homogenous discourse built on the "absence of a discourse": the erasure of colonial reflections was generally portrayed regardless of the country of origin of the speaker.

This outcome might be understood in the light of a specific process of socialisation within the EU institutions, where the EU's dominant narrative is strongly accepted and repeated without including the perspective of the non-power holding "other".

As Michel Foucault and poststructuralist discourse analyst saw it, a dominant discourse provides prevailing "accepted" rules and contains particular ideological beliefs and it embodies socialisation by the dominant or decision-making group.

Several studies in this sense prove that an international organization socialises those who work within it and that the European Commission of the European Union is a crucial case in this sense because it is an autonomous international organisation with a vocation to defend supranational norms (see for example Hooghe, 2005).

Despite the similarity of outcomes that I received from people from a different nationality, I was able to find a "competing narrative" in my interviews, that was put forward by a recently appointed Official with an NGO background. Indeed, among 62 interviews gathered, only one person referred immediately to the problems that a lack

of reflection on the colonial history entails for the creations and implementations of the EU peacebuilding policies in DRC, whereas a few others interviewed only considered the issue after a conversation about the topic.

And that is what emerged from the “counterfactual interviewee”:

The EU is not dealing with its colonial past, is a problem that is not addressed and we [the EU] don't want to address it because we will always have member states that would block it anyway. I think that in the hierarchies this is not even considered as a problem. Indeed, if you look at the list of EU Heads of Delegations in Africa, and you take their nationality and the country former power, you clearly see that it is not an issue. But I do believe it is a problematic aspect, in particular when dealing with countries like DRC. [...] I am not sure regarding how to assess this negative impact. And it is difficult to find a balance because you always have more people expert in DRC in Belgium, so the balance is between having a certain people with expertise in the country and on the other hand to guarantee a certain level of neutrality and independence.

(Int. 16)

In this statement, we can see that the standpoint of the interviewee is clearly heterodox compared to the others showed before in the chapter, as it argues that there is a problem of not dealing with colonial past.

But at the same time, the interlocutor's statement seems also regulated by the notion that the EU is somehow separated by its Member States when it is a matter of decision-making.

This point of linking EU and member state “at the best convenience” seems just a variation of the view expressed by the respondents that have been mentioned earlier.

Besides the consideration for the different bodies of the EU, the different countries of origin and the different backgrounds of the interviewees, another important aspect that determined a slightly different vision of the colonial memory is the gap between different generations. I could see that whereas older

Officers were more aware of the incumbrance of the Belgian colonial past in the history of DRC – possibly because some of them witnessed the transition from colonialism to independence - younger Officers were, on the contrary, generally less receptive to consider the importance of this legacy. Following Licata and Klein (2010) this difference can be explained either by referring to the different ideological backgrounds in which different generations were socialised.

1.3. A “Presentist Regime”

The second nodal point that contributes to the creation of the discursive strand of erasure of colonial memory is the one linked with the specific way the EU peacebuilding sector is structured. Indeed, EU peacebuilding policies are created in a day to day working environment that does not allow space for reflection to history. And when historical events are mobilised, they are only evoked to justify the present EU’s choice. This nodal point can, therefore, go under the name of “presentism”.

In the particular case of the EEAS, where the majority of peacebuilding policies are created, the presentist regime is evident in the work dynamic that lacks engagement in historical continuity and privileges the contingency of present practices. This might be due to two factors: the short time-frame within which officials are in one post and the crisis response mode of working.

i. Fast Mobility

The career within the institution is quite fast compared to other public administrations (see Balint, Bauer & Knill, 2008). In particular, at the EEAS, “mobility of staff is a key element of a professional European Diplomatic Service, and is required by the EEAS Council Decision” considering that “complementary exercises of Mobility (internal process for postings in HQ) and Rotation (both internal and external processes for postings in Delegations) are essential” (EEAS, 2016:11).

Moreover, at least 33% and no more than 40% of the human resources at EEAS are Temporary Agents from the diplomatic services of the Member States, whose contracts have normally a maximum duration of four years (EC, 2015). This creates a

situation in which rotations are quite frequent. During my personal working experience at EEAS, colleagues were mentioning that mobility is indeed a main asset in the recruitment of EEAS' personnel and the fastest way to get promotions.

Despite this being understandable for a diplomatic sector, the rapid exchange of posts might work quite well for technical positions, but it has definitely several shortfalls when considering the “geographic desks” (the offices working explicitly on a certain geographic area). Indeed, the short stay makes it very difficult for the civil servants to get a good knowledge of the country assigned. Basically, there is no time to understand the history of the country in which they work, and no special training is foreseen. This renders the personnel who work in the ‘peacebuilding sector’ not always suitably qualified and aware of the range of ethical, methodological, as well as political and social issues that go along with their role. Not to mention the fact that they are hardly ever aware of the historical power relations they are implicated in.

If we consider the case of DRC, when I started my traineeship at the EEAS in February 2016, a new person was just appointed to that desk, and she had never experienced working on African issues before and never visited Kinshasa.

She was the one to plan and write the Human Rights Strategy for the DRC, an important working document, that served as a basis to select the priority issues through a human security framework, including promoting human rights, addressing humanitarian crises, advancing economic development, designing and implementing peace missions and general allocation of funding⁴⁶.

Such general superficiality is mainly due to the short staying in a position, which does not allow the Officers to get a deep knowledge of the countries of which they are responsible to draft policies. In this context, history plays a minor role. The Deputy Head of the Central African Department, more than one time admitted that:

“I know, most of our staff’s historical memory does not go further than the “First Congo War”, I could ask them to open a book and read about that, but I cannot oblige them to do that”.

⁴⁶ In my staying at the EEAS, I was personally asked to draft the Human Right Strategy for the Sao Tome and Equatorial Guinea, even if my knowledge about these countries at the time was very limited.

Peacebuilding policy is regarded therefore more as a practical technical aspect to solve, rather than considered in terms of its deeper historical context and implications. Possible mitigation to this is offered by the support of EU Missions on the ground. There, some EU experts are dislocated for a short stay, but being plunged into the local reality is definitely an accelerator of knowledge and offers a much stronger possibility to reflect on history. However, for time contingencies the Missions tend to be consulted only after decisions are already taken in Brussels.

ii. Crisis Response Culture

A second practical aspect that potentially limits the engagement into an analysis of the impact of the colonial history of DRC when making peacebuilding policies is the crisis response mode of working. The day to day pressure to face constant emergencies impedes practitioners to actually look at the big picture and analyze the long term causes of a specific crisis and to link them with historical events. Thereby, even in the cases in which practitioners are aware of the historical colonial past, the mode of working does not allow them to give it a consideration.

For example, in the period between the 1 March and the 1 September 2016 the DRC faced a series of difficult moments⁴⁷: In this sequence of daily acts of violence in DRC, the EU tended not to engage in a long term analysis, but just to act promptly and find a way to position itself via communications, declarations or speeches.

In the opening speech to the Humanitarian Conference on the Democratic Republic of Congo on the 13 April 2018, Mr Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for

⁴⁷ Political violence and government repression severely intensified in 2016: authorities deliberately blocked plans to organize elections, government officials and security forces systematically repressed and intimidate the growing coalition of voices calling for credible, timely elections. At the same time, more than 100 activists and opposition leaders or supporters were arbitrarily arrested. Congo's justice minister opened an investigation into one of the country's leading opposition figures, Moïse Katumbi, for alleged recruitment of mercenaries. Étienne Tshisekedi come back to DRC, and the Congolese government blocked a Human Rights Watch senior researcher from continuing to work in Congo. Congolese took to the streets again to protest the electoral commission's failure to announce presidential elections, three months before the end of Kabila's term. Security forces responded with excessive violence, killing at least 66 people and setting at least three opposition party headquarters on fire. Some protesters also turned violent, beating or burning to death several police officers. At least eight journalists were detained in an apparent attempt to block independent reporting of the situation. (Human Rights Watch, 2016; 1-5)

Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Geneva concluded his speech showing the time-pressure:

“Dear friends, Time is running against us. It is now imperative to give the vulnerable people of DRC the help they need.”

(Stylianides, 2018:1)

This emerged also in one of the interviews with one of the EU functionaries, in which the interviewee –quite polemically- considers that there is a certain awareness of a possible academic debate evolving around their operations, but at the same time they are constrained by time-pressure

We do read strategic documents but we are constantly under this pressure of immediate requests and immediate needs. So we do not have time to bother to check the theoretical basis of our work or to see if some of our actions can be interpreted from academics as a colonial act.

(Int. 18)

Yet, during a COAFR meeting on Election in DRC, it was recognised that the EU should not push African countries to “resolve” quickly a situation of conflict. A striking example was given by the speaker saying: “South Africa took four years to establish elections. If the EU would have had the instruments to intervene at that time, we would have probably pushed and forced Mandela to resign or to change its strategy”.

This top-down approach in peacebuilding has been broadly analyzed elsewhere by a number of researchers (see for example Mac Ginty, 2011; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016, or in the specific case of DRC see Autesserre, 2010) and its postcolonial criticism has been explained in chapter two.

However, what is relevant to consider here is that the temporal contingencies of diplomatic practices and cultures, therefore, go hand in hand with diplomat dehistoricised discourses. This generates a situation that Calligaro (2015) defines as “presentism” when the past is only recalled to justify the present, going back to look for historical accounts when needed to explain a present emergency, rather than the

opposite (having a solidified historical view that allows one to interpret the present). For instance, officials refer to simplified accounts of history when this is functional to their actions.

That is clearly the case when dictatorship is mobilized to explain poverty and lack of development in DRC. The following is the standard introduction to the country background that is provided every year by the EEAS, where it is shown that the only cause of poverty and crisis is to be found in the decades of Mobutu's dictatorship.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a vast country (more than 2.3 million km), rich in natural resources (minerals, forests, oil and fertile land) and has more than 60 million inhabitants divided between 200 ethnic groups. Yet, despite immense resources, poverty is widespread in the DRC and today the recent food prices and financial crisis impacted heavily on the social and economic situation of the country. In addition, the DRC's human development index is one of the lowest in the world (0.361 – being 177th rank out of 179 countries according to the UNDP). *All this is the consequence of decades of dictatorship under President Mobutu Sese Seko*, followed by regional wars (1997 and 1998-2002) leading to the death of an estimated 4-5 million people. Today, the DRC can be regarded as a fragile post-conflict state.

(EEAS, DRC Country Fiche 2016, emphasis added)

In other words, as novelist and prominent Nigerian thinker Chimamanda Adichie said: “Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story” (Adichie, 2009).

Another frequent narrative is the belief that decades of dictatorship crystalized the possibility for the Congolese to autonomous recovery, with a clear impact in the peace missions and in the peace projects. This discourse is used to justify top-down approaches in peacebuilding. Emblematic is also the case of the chain of payment within the EUSEC: the EU heads of the mission did not give money directly to the Congolese' soldiers believing they were not able to spend money appropriately.

All this explains that the African past is mobilized to explain chaos, inefficiency and wars, a peace-deficit but only to the extent it serves the contemporary objectives of the EU in showing the country situations and needs; and only to the extent that this reflection on African's past does not involve a self-reflection on the European past in connection to Africa.

Such over-simplification of history does not leave space to question the Western position towards dictatorship, and obviously, it does not allow a reflection on the link between colonialism and dictatorship, or on the European role in supporting Mobutu.

2. The Positive Legacy of Colonialism

Together with this first dominant discursive strand, a second one can be identified in the interviews and documents analysed. In this second discursive strand appears a sense of awareness regarding the legacy of colonialism, but it shows the positive connotations of such legacy:

The EU will have always a special relationship with its former colonies. Even if we should not discriminate whether a country is a former colony or not to intervene, and we need to make a strong and neutral analysis, but the interest orients the EU towards those places.

(Int. 19)

Here emerges another important point: the EU is more likely to be interested in, and possibly to intervene in former colonies. This interviewee does not deny the colonial link as those selections of interviews shown in the previous paragraph but sees in the colonial connections a positive motivation to pursue peacebuilding campaigns.

Several other interviews tended to idealise the outcomes of colonisation: cultural links, language, common understanding and common history are seen as a favourable precondition for the success of peacebuilding in DRC. The discursive strand of a positive legacy of colonialism is supported by two nodal points that are explained in the following subheadings: the idea of the coloniser as an expert in DRC

peacebuilding and the idea of a certain colonial pride about the positive role of colonialism in DRC.

2.1. Coloniser as Expert

In the following excerpts, it is possible to understand that the narrative of a positive legacy of colonialism is shared by several EU Officials working on peacebuilding practices in DRC, along with different sectors and different competencies.

For example, in the Geographical desk in DEVCO the Deputy Head of Unity admitted:

“The influence of Belgium could be considered controversial by some, but I think it is important because they won’t let them go, like other countries. They care about DRC, and lobby for the allocation of funds and projects there.”

(Int. 20)

What is particularly interesting in this excerpt is the expression “*won’t let them go*”, the idea – in other words - that despite decolonisation Belgium is seeking to maintain a continuous relationship with the former colony. According to the interviewee, it is clear that the Belgian role is considered positive because it lobbies for putting DRC in the core of the EU’s interest.

This was already evident during the Belgian presidency of the Council in 2001 when the EU Council asked Belgium to develop a European policy for Central Africa and, unsurprisingly, DRC was included in the European priorities (see Wilen, 2013).

Several authors argue that Belgium made use of the EU to promote its relationship with Africa, with a specific interest in undertaking an explicit role in DRC. Kelly (2008), for example, showed that Belgium adopted an intervention strategy in DRC that relies heavily on a European multilateral approach to security issues in this country, because it maintains the visibility and credibility of the Belgian state as a participant in intervention efforts for the DRC, while minimizing the possibility of Belgium being perceived as a neo-colonial actor.

In the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), one of the Officials working in the mission EUPOL Kinshasa also reflected on the Europeanisation of Belgian peacebuilding efforts in DRC, confirming the underlying narrative that the Belgian influence is a benign factor:

Of course, Belgians prefer to intervene through CSDP and not using a bilateral approach to Congo which would be too costly for a little country like Belgium. And in EUPOL the head of the mission was Belgian, and there has been a strong Belgian component in the mission. But it was a positive interest they had. And a positive outcome – I am indeed writing just now the final report. So, Belgians are our point of contact with DRC. They help us understand local culture and thoughts.

(Int. 21)

The idea that Belgians are the experts on Congolese culture, and therefore they serve as “interpreter” to explain DRC to the rest of EU troops, or to other Officials, is a common discourse shared by all the Officers contacted during this research.

This argument is used in the moment of writing strategies (like the Country Human Rights Strategy, which defines the framework of action and the consequent allocation of money) or proposals for allocation of peacebuilding funds (like the one allowed by the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace) when EU officers of Belgian nationality or external Belgians experts are consulted, but it becomes even more relevant for planning and implementing CSDP missions. Indeed, it is in the CSPD departments that the role of Belgian military staff in the EU reaches its peak:

Some people still assert that Belgium has interest in Central Africa. That is the problem. This is a very narrow and false picture. Why? Do you really think that this is the case? I am convinced that Belgians’ intervention in Congo is something that should be presented as positive, not negative. I give you an example of the importance of this kind of link: Without Belgians, there would have been no EUSEC, for example, or, better, the

EUSEC would have been a failure. And it is clear that no one better than Belgians can deal with Congolese, the same as us [French] in Mali.

(Int. 22)

Another interviewee agrees on this point:

We must say we are extremely grateful to the Belgian armed forces for the massive contribution they made to EUPOL and EUSEC, we completely relied on this. And the Belgians we had in EUSEC, particularly the ones working in Kamina and Kitona, established a particularly good connection with Congolese and this helped enormously the mission.

(Int.23)

In these discourses, Belgians are seen as the interpreter, the mediators, the “only ones capable of dealing with the Congo”. If we push this argument further, we can reflect on the fact that the former colonial master is the one asked for “giving voice” and “representing” the Congo’s interests and priorities while making peace policies.

Again, in another interview it is clearly and explicitly admitted:

The Belgians are sticking with them in areas that are really important to us, like army reform and so on. And it is good for them to have a reliable partner. Whatever the motivation for that partnership is – and some of this must be to do with guilt- nevertheless the partner is reliable and is clearly going to be there for a long time and they speak out for them, and in the EU foreign policy the size of a member state does not necessarily give more or fewer influences of another member state.

(Int. 24)

My argument is that in so doing, Belgium continues to represent its former colony and this limits Congolese subjectivity through a process already identified by Spivak’s study about western representation of subaltern subjects (Spivak, 1988, 1990). Belgians are representing DRC as “speaking for” them, and in the process of creating

policies, Belgians are often considered as substitutes for DRC representatives, and experts in the field.

This representation happens as an “embodiment” and takes place on a dialogical level, where the Congolese reality is portrayed by Belgian Officials within EU’s institutions and mediated by Belgian’s perception. In so doing, the former colonised identity is made to exist as part of a world essentially constructed by the former colonial subject⁴⁸.

According to a rich scholarship of authors, originated by the work of Spivak “Can the subaltern speak?” (1988) this process is dangerous as it takes away the DRC’s ability to speak in the sense that their speech would be affected by the very presence of those trying to give them a voice.

The same results emerged also from an interview conducted with the Action Officer in the Crisis Response Planning Division of the EEAS. He is in charge of the coordination of activities for EUSEC DRC in Brussels, and he frequently travels to the Headquarters of the mission in Kinshasa. He is Italian, therefore we spoke Italian in all our conversation and this helped to put the interviewee at ease and to speak frankly.

Once stimulated on talking about the relevance of a postcolonial narrative in his relationship with the recipients of the mission, the interviewee said:

There is a description of Belgium as a coloniser. And of course, they [Congolese] consider the Europeans as Belgium’s ally. But, despite this, they love Belgium. You just have to consider that the most popular book there is “Tintin in the Congo”. The generation that is 40-50 years old knows this book by heart. I saw people doing wooden sculptures of all the characters of the book, really beautiful. And they like the comics because it is one of the few occasions in which they are in the spotlight.

(Int.25)

The interviewee is asserting that Belgium is not seen as coloniser anymore, and to prove this he mobilises a very interesting example: he explains that the most popular

⁴⁸ The same could be seen in Congolese historiography, where most of the authors writing about Congo history are Belgians.

book in DRC is “Tintin in the Congo”, a book edited by the Belgian cartoonist Hergé in 1931 on the adventures of a Belgian child detective in colonial Congo.

This comic has been infamously known for being accused of “bundling right-wing, reactionary and racist viewpoints into its codes of visual representation and storylines” (Mountfort, 2011:33 and also Hunt, 2002).

The comic, indeed, shows a racialised humour that portrays the Congolese as backwards and lazy, infantile and stupid, in need of European mastery. For these reasons, in 2007, the UK Commission for Racial Equality asked for it to be removed from sale because of its “hideous racial prejudice” (see Medran, Uriarte & López, 2009).

Coming back to the above interviewee, his argument was that the Congolese like Belgium because they read this comic, and that this very comic is one of the few moments in the story of the literature in which the Congolese are the protagonist.

What is a clearly unproblematic concept for my interviewee, reveals some problematic aspects in terms of colonial prejudice. The fact that the Congolese are still reading this comic might also shed light on another interesting aspect: reading “Tintin in Congo” that stigmatizes the Congolese as infantile, dumb and monkey-like can be interpreted as a signal that Congolese are still victims of their colonial past and stereotypes, rather than a proof of their good relationship with Belgians.

The assertion that “Tintin in the Congo” is a popular book in DRC, could indeed lead to a rethink of how much the “master culture” was persistent, so as to remain crystallised in the culture of those who suffered from such discrimination. Indeed, according to what has been portrayed by the interviewee, Congolese do not feel uncomfortable in reading a story that treats themselves as ignorant quasi-human being.

Moreover, it shows that this kind of narrative still operates today in the context of EU peacebuilding as its actors are embedded within the same colonial culture. It shows then, the pervasiveness and institutionalisation of such colonial prejudices.

2.2. Colonial Pride

Connected with the first nodal point about the Belgians as an interpreter, there is a second one that focuses on the positive achievements of colonisation.

The same interviewee that spoke about Tintin, went on in the argumentation, telling me an anecdote that reflects on this:

Look, I became friends with a local– a civilian – who lived close to us. He was a smart guy; however, one day when I was telling him about the problems of the country and how things should be, he started again with the classic attack to Belgians. Like if every hell would come from there. In short, they use colonialism as an excuse. They have the tendency of accusing the white man of their problems, but I want to say: “what really Belgians did to you? They created mines, streets; the borders have been created by Europeans. Who made you become the biggest country in Africa? They are so proud of that!

(Int. 25)

This colonial pride of having built the Congo is a leitmotif of all Congolese colonisation. We can, for example, remember the letter that Henry Spaak, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs sent to the Belgian King in 1956 after his visit in Congo, saying that the Blacks should feel grateful to Belgium for having created the Congo and pacified it.

*Il n'ya jamais eu de nation congolaise. C'est la Belgique qui a apporté au Congo la paix en mettant fin aux guerres que les tribus ne cessaient de se faire. C'est peut-être ce que les noirs sentent plus fortement: cette sécurité que nous créée.*⁴⁹

(HAEU, PHS-329)

⁴⁹ "There has never been a Congolese nation. It was Belgium that brought peace to the Congo by putting an end to the wars that the tribes were constantly making. That's perhaps what black people feel more strongly: the security that we create." [author own translation].

Another aspect worthy of discussion is the interest in showing the positive aspects of colonisation, such as the building of infrastructure, schools and hospitals in the Congo, but ignoring or leaving out, the brutalism, racism and imperialism which were part of the colonial endeavour. In this respect, Nina Wilen (2013) investigates how the Belgian Army – in the contemporary context - idealizes Belgian colonial experience as the “golden age” of Congo.

According to Wilen, this biased view might be derived from the Belgian literature on colonisation (see Evans, 2003) that reproduced the idea that Belgium as a country did not actively seek to colonise the Congo, but was called upon to take over the country after King Leopold II no longer was entitled to rule it. The thesis already touched upon this point in Chapter Four, unmasking the inaccurate claim of Belgians as a ‘reluctant coloniser’, which could also be considered as a prolongation of a discursive strategy that allows for the avoidance of reflection around their colonial role, as shown by the analysis of Bobineau (2017), already analysed in this thesis.

In the context of the main argument, we could consider that the representation of the DRC might be therefore influenced by Belgian’s colonial history and by the interest that the country still has in Congo.

Despite the positive and benevolent impetus of CSDP Officials working in DRC and their genuine ambition of “bringing peace”, representation of DRC could be considered partial, if it is mediated by a dominant subjectivity that rarely questions the colonial era.

As an example, Louis Michel, the Belgian former EU development commissioner and current prominent Liberal MEP gave a speech calling King Leopold II, a "visionary hero". In that period Michel was the vice-president of the EU's Joint Parliamentary Assembly with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP). In this speech, he said:

The Belgians built railways, schools and hospitals and boosted economic growth. Leopold turned the Congo into a vast labour camp? Really? In those days it was just the way things were done. [...] We can easily be

tempted to exaggerate when it comes to the Congo. I feel instinctive that he was a hero, a hero with ambitions for a small country like Belgium.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Despite colonialism being central to the story of European integration and its relations with African countries, this point is far from being recognised by EU Officers in charge of peacebuilding policymaking.

In this chapter, it has been analysed to what extent colonialism has been taken into account by EU peacebuilding practitioners, by studying its discursive representation.

Two main interlinked discursive strands have been recognised in the interview process: the one concerning the total irrelevance of colonial history for EU peacebuilding in DRC, and the other admitting a positive legacy of colonialism in contemporary peacebuilding in the DRC focusing on the relevance of former colonisers as experts.

Such discursive strands confirm the presence of colonial legacy in EU peacebuilding policymaking and the reproduction of colonial discourse.

Indeed, the two ambivalent discursive strands indicate a colonial rationale that is based on the ambivalence of forgetting the colonial past but saving its positive legacy.

Such colonial rationale is constructed on a discursive ambiguity: different and sometimes competing statements are contributing to building together a complex discourse based on a “dehistoricised Europe”. History, in other words, is not considered relevant in the EU Official’s discourses but, at the same time, a partial consideration of historical events and colonial ties is evoked, when it is functional to the legitimisation of peacebuilding practices.

⁵⁰ To read the full version of the interview: Leigh Philipps, Ex-commissioner calls Congo's colonial master a 'visionary hero', Eu Observer, Jun 2010. Available at: <https://euobserver.com/foreign/30345>. Luis Michel seems not to be the only nostalgic of the myth of King Leopold the II. For instance, the 17th December 2015 the City of Brussels organized a ceremony and a conference to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the coronation of King Leopold II, which was cancelled only the day before thanks to the effort of association fighting for human rights and against racism in Brussels. What is certain is that 55 years after the independence, Belgium is still trying to position itself with respect of the ghost of colonialism.

This ambivalence allows the reproduction of a colonial regime of truth, where there is no space to question EU's authority on defining the truth.

In his sense, the discursive field of EU peacebuilding politics seems to be the complex and constitutive field of power relations allowed by the historical dimension of colonial discourse.

Indeed, it is the selective and ambivalent conception of history that reinforces the peacebuilding regime of truth, where history becomes a "tactical element" (Lorenzini, 2015:3) in the functioning of power relations between EU and DRC.

Moving from these findings, in the next chapter, the thesis will direct its inquiry to identify the possible consequences of such discursive production in peacebuilding policymaking and practice.

Chapter Seven

Building Peace, Reproducing Discriminations

“Acknowledging the colonial past, apologising for, it is important. But the real question is one of the modifications of exploitation’s trajectories”

(Colette Braeckman, author’s own translation)

Introduction

The previous chapter explained how the colonial question is perceived and discursively represented among EU Officers in charge of working on peacebuilding policies in the DRC.

Two main interlinked discursive strands were recognised: one concerning the disregard for the colonial history of EU peacebuilding in the DRC and the other admitting a positive legacy of colonialism in contemporary peacebuilding in the DRC, mainly *vis à vis* the role of the former coloniser.

Building on these results, this chapter is using such evidence to take a step further. Indeed, here the focus is on exploring whether the way in which the colonial past is framed can have consequences on how peacebuilding policies are created.

The absence of reflection on the colonial past and its representation as a positive for Congolese’ conflict resolution can frame a certain regime of truth, in which colonial knowledge might be reproduced.

The focus of this research now moves to the analysis of such a regime that allowed the reproduction of a colonial discourse. The main argument advanced is that a lack of self-reflection about the EU’s colonial past and the selective use of history (as the two

main discursive strands identified in the previous chapter) might lead to a reproduction of colonial bias within EU peacebuilding discourses and policies.

In doing so, this chapter is structured with the following questions in mind:

- What are the consequences of the presence of a “colonial legacy” for the construction of peacebuilding practices?
- To what extent do current EU peacebuilding practitioners tend to reproduce colonial knowledge related to the DRC?
- How is the lack of self-reflection about the EU colonial past leading to the reproduction of colonial stereotypes and biases?

In the analysis of peacebuilding discourses, colonial biases are individuated in the reproduction of certain discursive strategies as part of colonial knowledge/power relations.

Colonial discourses are studied and operationalised by using the interpretative tool that was explained in chapter two, in the context of a historical discourse analysis methodology with evidence gathered through interviews, archival research, documentary analysis, and participant observation.

Thus, an analysis is provided of the discourses of EU peacebuilding policymakers concerning the recipients of such policies and the way in which such discourses are also co-constitutive of peacebuilding practices.

To this end, the chapter is divided into two parts. Section one uncovers the reproduction of discursive strategies as supporting the continuity of the colonial discourse in peacebuilding. Such discursive strategies are anchored in stereotypes about the recipients of peacebuilding policies as well as about the peacebuilders.

The chapter analyses several stereotypes found in the interviews and in participant observation (the idea of a temporal gap, infantilisation of the local, the fragility, peacebuilding as a burden to the EU and the description of the Congolese as lax and violent). This study reveals how such stereotypes tend to reproduce the classical dichotomist structure of colonial discourses within the peacebuilding framework.

Section two demonstrates that colonial discourses are also mirrored in the practices of peacebuilding. This leads to a peacebuilding practice that is ideologically built on the criterion of double standards and reproduces the marginalisation of the “local” in policymaking.

1. Colonial Stereotypes Uncovered

Bhabha (1994) has elaborated on the role of a “stereotype” as a major discursive strategy in colonial discourses in his path-breaking work *The Location of Culture*. Stereotype, as a mode of discourse, functions by exaggerating the difference of the Other, whilst nevertheless attempting to produce them as stable, fully knowable objects (see Hook, 2005).

Chapter two showed that the stereotype in colonial discourse works as the main mode of identification of the coloniser and colonised, by operating on two main aspects: the fixity in the ideological construction of otherness and ambivalence (Bhabha, 2012; 94-100).

According to Bhabha, it is the ambivalence of the stereotype that ensures its repeatability “in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation; produces the effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed” (Bhabha, 2012; 94).

In this section, the aim is to chart the function of stereotypes as a discursive strategy that allows the reproduction of colonial discourse in peacebuilding policymaking. Moreover, an account is provided that shows how stereotypes as forms of knowledge and identification are employed by EU personnel to represent the Congolese recipients of peacebuilding policies, and how the structure of peacebuilding policymaking relies on such knowledge production.

The main stereotypes identified are a temporal gap between peacebuilder and recipients, an infantilisation of the local recipient, the definition of the Congolese as fragile, the construction of Congolese identity as lax and violent, and the consideration of the EU’s moral responsibility as a civilising burden.

1.1. Temporal Gap

As alluded in chapter two, Western historicism still feeds and legitimises the myth of modernity: the idea that there is a universal scale of development that teleologically unfolds towards a model of Western progress and modernity. In relation to Africa in particular, lacking modernity has been seen as an attribute fixed to the continent and linked to a sense of incomplete and primordial chaos (Mbembe, 2001).

The classification of all non-Westerners as fundamentally non-historical is tied to the assumption that for history to be meaningful it must be moulded into a European shape (see Trouillot, 1995).

Hegel considered Africans as non-historic people and Marx carried over this Eurocentric bias (see Summer 1995). Based on the reports of European explorers such as the Victorian Richard Burton, Europeans dismissed Africa's achievements, systems of thought, and values. In this sense, Africa was considered to be without history as it had nothing civilised or worth mentioning as history. This followed the pretention of Western epistemology as being the unilateral scale of measurement of every historical process. In the historical evolution of the European-African relationship (see chapter four), Europe undertook the role of nurturing Africa with the good characteristics of the European community in order to raise the continent from its primordial status and into a modern world. In a similar vein, many scholars considered that the EU's foreign policy had the task of bringing some countries out of their pre-modern status (see Cooper, 2006 and Aggestam, 2008).

Despite this, chapter four considered that more recently the EU had attempted to step back from this messianic role by performing a more pragmatic approach in the global system. The interviews conducted to confirm that the officials in charge of peacebuilding policymaking in the DRC tend to agree on a "developmental" idea of time, where Congo has not reached the "modern" EU status.

Indeed, the typical idea of linear notions of progress and modernity in which Europe is at the apogee is another one of the relevant similarities to colonial discourses that were discovered in the interviews. In particular, twelve of those interviewed stressed this concept of history and fell back to different discursive stereotypes such as underdeveloped/ backwards/ premodern etc. For instance, one interviewee declared:

They are at least 60 years behind us and I used to tell my staff that building an army there [in the DRC] is like creating a European army at the beginning of the 50s in Europe. It is easy to criticise, but we have to acknowledge that in Congo 20 years of history are lacking. And if you consider it, they are doing progress, so it is important to provide help and to show them how to do better. They do not necessarily need money, but they need competences because, as I said, they are lacking at least 20 years of history.

(Int.26)

In this sense, the Congolese are seen as unequal or fundamentally different because they are incomplete and backwards; but they have the potential to become equal to the EU-self in the future. Moreover, in the interview excerpt presented above, what emerges is the idea that the Congolese “lack history” - referring to the specific Civil War period. Conflict is seen as a non-period, a sum of years in which the country receded instead of proceeding in the linear progression towards modernity.

In this regard, it is interesting to notice that the two World Wars have often been contrarily considered by historians as triggering historical changes. For example, Sondhaus considers that the First World War was an “accelerator of revolutionary changes on an unprecedented scale” (Sondhaus, 2011: i) and Polenberg (1968) argues that World War II was a catalyst for an accelerative change in global history. This might also be linked to Mary Kaldor’s (1999) idea about the difference between ‘old’ and ‘new’ war. She describes the ‘new’ conflicts – mainly in post-colonial areas – as predatory and irrational, politically illegitimate and driven by private interests, whereas ‘old’ conflicts were rational, constitutive of collective interest and politically legitimate. This creates a moral divide between the Western way of “rational” war and the new “non-Western” conception and allows the author to argue for a necessary external peacebuilding intervention to bring the respect of international law into the post-colonial irrational chaos.

Another interviewee repeats the same historical conception by replicating the typical myth of the EU as a peace ambassador, and as a constituent of the EU’s historiography “myth” (see Ifversen, 2010), thereby becoming a necessary thread in the idea of the

EU as a normative power (Manners, 2002). The EU can spread its peace message because it has already overcome that stage of the war, and once reached, the internal pacification can spread peace externally.

We can teach them because we already overcame this stage [the war]. Europe was able to do that, and thanks to our experience we can tell those less advanced countries that it is possible to overcome crisis and conflicts.

(Int. 27)

In another passage from an interview with military staff working in EUSEC, we can see a different angle relating to the same topic:

The problem of the Crisis Management Missions is that they have short-term mandates, maximum 10-15 years. But the risk then is that there is no appropriation of the mission, no local ownership. And if we consider EUPOL and EUSEC that is a big drama. There should be a follow-up by the Commission but I am very sceptic. You know, the risk is that all the work we have done will be in vain, Congolese will not appreciate the work we have done, they will not follow up on our achievements. Exactly as when Belgians left. Here everything is crystallised in 1960 when the Belgians left. Congolese did not do anything to take care of what Belgians created.

(Int. 28)

The aspect to notice in this paragraph concerns ownership, whereby at the end there is a strong analogy between the EUSEC mission and the Belgian colonial period. The analogy is the following: according to the interviewee, once the EU mission ends the Congolese will not follow up the implementations and innovation brought, exactly as much as they did not continue the modernisation delivered by the Belgians. It seems that it is Europe (Belgium first and the EU currently) that will allow the DRC to progress in history by pushing the country ahead. According to the interviewee, since the DRC is left alone it enters into a phase of “crystallisation” where there is no relevant local action to follow up the European “example”, and they, therefore, fall

into a phase of historical paralysis. It is up to the EU (and the Belgians before) to render the Congolese's history meaningful by allowing it to proceed in its evolution.

This argument is also frequently put forward in relation to another popular discourse: the one relating to the Belgians leaving the Congo too early⁵¹. When listening to peacebuilding policymakers both in the EEAS, DEVCO and ECHO, one idea echoed is that the Congolese's never-ending conflict is due to the quick "departure" of Belgians. In such discourse, it is often reiterated that the Belgians should have remained longer to assist in a transition period. For instance, in the following excerpt a Belgian senior advisor of EU-Africa relations within the EEAS stated:

“We left too early due to international pressure. Congo was not ready, and it is still paying the consequences of our sudden retreat”.

(Int.29)

It is interesting that in this utterance the speaker says “we left”, speaking from a Belgian standpoint and despite being asked for analysis as an EU expert. Interviewees from other EU countries confirmed, however, that there is a general perception that Belgian abandonment left the DRC in institutional paralysis, which still has to be solved. This view is broadly shared by the historiography as well (see for instance Edgerton, 2002).

What is important to consider is that the interviewees who indicated that Civil War and the war-torn condition of the DRC were caused by the ‘abandonment’ of Belgium, do not also refer to the general colonial incursion and its disruptive effects as other possible causes of the DRC's ‘fragility’.

⁵¹ Historical commentaries very frequently describe the fact that the Belgians were sure to remain in the Congo for a very long period, and that the decolonial impetus obliged them to give the Congo its independence, even if they considered it a very premature step. For instance Michel Amory, working in the Belgian Minister of Colony and the in the EURATOM said : « *Alors plus tard je suis entré par hasard au service de l'Europe parce que j'étais, comme tous les Belges de l'époque, soumis à la tentation africaine, comme je dis. Le Congo avait participé brillamment à l'effort de guerre et tout le monde croyait que nous étions encore au Congo pour au moins trente ans.* » (HAEU, HistCom.2 « *Histoire interne de la Commission européenne 1973-1986* »)

1.2. The Infantilisation

Descriptions of the colonial native as ‘child-like’ date back to the 17th century as common metaphors of American and European imperialism. The infantilisation of the colonial Other was diffused in infamous images from various comic renderings of the ‘White Man’s Burden’, where the white man is feeding, teaching, and nurturing the black infant.

Such a notion of colonised people as “big kids” whose intellectual capacity was different by nature or temporarily limited, was one of the ideological tricks used to legitimise local censorship, authoritarianism and the need for guidance in colonial times. For this purpose, colonial authorities saw themselves as protectors of individuals unable to exercise critical judgment (see Goerg, 2012).

Infantilisation, in fact, transforms the native from a free subject into a helpless, non-aggressive individual without agency. More importantly, infantilisation implies the creation of a strong power relation between the “adult”- white and the “child”- native (Nayar, 2015: 95). Given this power relation, the child-native becomes the responsibility of the white adult who can discipline, educate, improve, and modify the child, acting on their behalf and wishing for their improvement.

Moreover, the child-native’s wishes might be ignored or changed because it is assumed that the child speaks from a position of ignorance (ibid). In the case of India, the British were even referred to by the natives as ‘mai-baap’: ‘our mother and father’ (see also Gilmour, 2006).

The use of infantilisation can be retraced in the discourses in the Congo in the period just before their independence when the Belgians were considering whether to include the Congo in the European Common Market. For instance, during the conference in 1959 on “*Le Développement économique du Congo dans la Perspective du Marché Commun*”, the Congo was described as a teenager, an ungrateful age in which the tutor is still necessary but its intervention must be less invasive and more careful:

On a pu dire, avec justesse, que le Congo était arrivé à l’âge de la puberté, cet ‘âge ingrat’ ou le tuteur reste encore nécessaire, mais ou ses

*interventions doivent être empreintes de la plus grande délicatesse.*⁵²

(HAEU, LECE-0316_03)

Anticolonial movements and postcolonial nation-building saw concerted attempts by colonised and newly-independent peoples to assert their agency and challenge the infantilism imposed on them by colonialism. Despite this, allusions to infantilism persist in western discourses and imageries and continue to resonate within contemporary geopolitics and development.

Several postcolonial scholars have attempted to call attention to such discursive strategies in today's global politics (see Baaz 2005; Burman 1995; McEwan 2009). In the same way, this study can be an added value to such voices.

Indeed, persistent discursive strategies of infantilisation have been found in the EU practitioner speeches. In particular, while discussing the different peacebuilding strategy implemented and the reasons behind this, seven interviewees used this kind of discursive strategy to legitimise the role of the EU and their job as peacebuilder.

For instance, in the following paragraph, the interviewee is comparing the soldiers trained by EUSEC to a child starting to walk on its own feet.

EUSEC is entered in its conclusive phase because fifteen years have passed and now the child is ready to walk alone. [...] Yes it is like when you have a child: We expected the moment and we saw that they were able to stand with their own feet. Of course, we are not abandoning them, and the project "Progress" under the eleventh EDF will monitor the work done so far. We will follow our baby. It took us so long to achieve certain standards that we will not abandon the military sector there once we finally get some results .

(Int. 30)

Several other speeches referring to the Congo as a child dramatically recall the colonial discourses and the use of infantilisation rhetoric in colonial Congo. As a further example:

⁵²HAEU, LECE-0316_03. Le Développement économique du Congo dans la Perspective du Marché Commun.pg 58.

They never experienced real democracy. They moved from Belgium to Mobutu and Kabila. It was always someone to tell them what to do, and this trait emerges in our relationship with Kinshasa. They do not know how to build their own free institutions and how to stop the conflict. That is our major tasks. They are young and they need experienced advice on how to build a solid state. And we started from the military sector reform as it was the most problematic. After several years of activities, this Office is proud to say that we allowed the army to improve, being more accountable and respecting rights.

(Int. 31)

In this interview excerpt, the Officer is saying that the DRC is young and lacks experience because it has always been dominated by authoritarian powers. In finding an answer to this, his argument seems regulated by an infantilisation discourse, reminiscent of an earlier period: the EU has to teach the young DRC how to stop conflicts and build solid institutions.

The infantilisation here seems to provide further strength to the idea of EU normative power explored in chapter one, and its capacity to export norms and act as a model. It certainly seems that the EU normative power is imbued with colonial stereotypes.

In the understanding of continuities and discontinuity from the colonial past, however, it is important to make a step further and consider also the changes that are in these discursive strands. Indeed, whereas the strategy of infantilisation seems to retrace quite the same logic as old colonial stereotypes, it is also interesting to acknowledge that it triggers a key difference from the colonial time to the present. Indeed, the pedagogical rationality underpinned in the infantilisation process, *we will follow our baby/ They are young and they need experienced advice*, is also associated with a more technocratic perspective: *achieve certain standards/we finally get some results*.

Such technocratic discourses use a patronising approach not just for the sake of ‘teaching’ the infants/childish recipients but to pursue a specific technical goal. The union of old colonial discourse with this new technocratic arguments is very peculiar in this sense, and resonate broadly in other discourses analysed.

In this sense, Keene (2013) talks about the substitution of the ‘*European civilisation*’ for a kind of administrative and international ‘best practice’, in which the EU is one kind of competent, technically expert bureaucratic regulating mechanism in a world made up of exactly identical mechanisms. This is seen as a challenge for the EU’s ability to maintain its own sense of international identity and its ‘normative difference’.

However, we see here that instead of substitution of discourses, there is more of a coexistence of the two: the technocratic argument remains with the more traditional civilisation discourse.

Even acting on two different levels, pedagogical rationality and technocratic rationality are both reinforcing the binary between donor/recipient, EU/DRC with the effect of perpetuating dependency. In fact, this process moves in quite the opposite way to the official declarations about EU-African partnership and the goal of overcoming the donor/recipient relationship acclaimed at the Joint European African Strategy from 2007. On the contrary, this paternalistic way of conducting peacebuilding might create and perpetuate dependency instead of allowing autonomous ownership of the peace process.

i. The Orphan

The DRC is often used as a counter-example to another metaphor that emerges frequently when discussing Central African countries: the orphan.

The metaphor of “Orphan State” is a recurring one within EEAS/DEVCO/ECHO, to refer to states where few international actors are engaged in peace and development policies, despite the fact that there are no significant political barriers to block international engagement in the country. These “orphan states” are also often considered “aid orphans”, due to the exclusionary effects of peacebuilding and aid policies in such war-torn states.

In practice, the “orphans” are those countries that do not have the protection of international states and organisations. This is due to the absence of political interest – often where there are no former European colonial masters that lobby for them (Liberia for example), or those abandoned by the former colonial power. In this last case, it is very recurrent in the description of the Central African Republic (CAR),

where European states do not have an interest in putting forward a strong peacebuilding policy.

In almost all the speeches during a conference on Conflict Analysis in Central Africa that took place on the 16th April 2016 in Brussels (organised by EEAS and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations DPKO) there was a reference to the need to break the isolation of orphan states, primarily CAR, but also Burundi.

The use of the word orphan, however, is not casual and is part of the process of infantilisation previously discussed in this chapter. Orphan, indeed, is a word charged with colonial symbolism that sees the power relations among states similarly to within a family, where colonies are seen as the immature children and the colonial masters are the mature, protective, and severe parents. As often expressed in the colonial literature, motherland provides a comforting shelter for its colonies as in a family. And even if the individual state is granted its independence, the old imperial centre will still be 'the mother country' (see for example the analysis of Hanley, 1994). In this sense, an orphan (state) is one that has been abandoned by the mother (land) or that has lost the mother (land) irrevocably. The use of Congolese as a counter-metaphor has been used by four interviewees, whereas other five interviewees agreed on this use after my initial suggestion. As an example, the following excerpt explains:

The EU will have always a special relationship with his former colonies. Even if we should not discriminate where a country is a former colony or not intervene, and we need to make a strong and neutral analysis, but the interest orient the EU toward those places. That is why we talk about the Orphan States. I would argue that it should not be like that because, as a point of principle, we should not discriminate and then we should address where the needs are greatest through our peacebuilding instruments.

(Int. 32)

As mentioned, it is interesting that the DRC is used as a counter-example to this metaphor, to highlight the strong bonds with its 'motherland'. In this regard, the condition of "protectorate" is a positive factor in peacebuilding policymaking, as it allows non-orphan countries to benefit from more attention and more lobbying for their interests.

Of course, there is the case of the orphan states, that do not have the protection of any member states that could advocate for them in our fora. But there are only a few of them, and Congo with this regard is well protected.

(Int. 33)

It is also remarkable to notice how this utterance seems to articulate an ambivalent relationship with the discursive strand about the non-relevance of colonial ties in current peacebuilding, and how this reflects the complex intertextual ambivalence of colonial discourse. Indeed, the obliviousness of colonial history seems once again in contradiction with the selective use of colonial ties, when required by the goal of peacebuilding policies.

1.3. Fragility and Failure

The belief in a linear sense of history and development based on European standards, for which the DRC's history makes sense only if compared to the EU's historical steps, can also be related to another discursive strategy that portrays the DRC as a fragile state.

In chapter two, the concept of state fragility or collapsed states was unpacked from a postcolonial angle, considering that the term "failed states" is misleading. The criticism of the notion of a failed state is recurrent in literature, so prominent and thought-provoking contrasting examples are offered here, in the context of the usage of this term in the case of EU peacebuilding policymaking towards the DRC.

As Tusalem (2016) notices, if we need to work within the concept of "failure" in post-colonial countries, the causes of such failure should be mostly attributed to the colonial domination, rather than to the incapacity of the state itself to autonomously recover. Furthermore, the idea of failed states is attributed to very "young" states. It is to say, that those states are considered failed from the very beginning of their history as self-determined nations.

Deepening the analysis on the case of the DRC, and how this concept is framed in the construction of EU peacebuilding policies, it is relevant to notice that a precondition to any EU peacebuilding policy in the country is the consideration that the DRC is a fragile state.

The concept of fragility is indeed extremely significant in creating peacebuilding practices as the discourses around fragility generate a series of policies aimed at “strengthening” the fragile state and avoiding it “relapsing” into violence and conflict.

It is very common for statements on the DRC to start with a description of the country as fragile:

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is widely recognised as one of the most fragile states in the world. The incapacity of the state to deliver basic services to its population is a convincing indicator of fragility.

*(ECA, 2013)*⁵³

State building and progress in good governance are at the centre of the EU-DRC partnership. The context of extreme fragility prevailing in the DRC will need to be taken into consideration and defining priorities is necessary.

*(EEAS, 2011)*⁵⁴

The majority of the interpretations within the EU’s documents, factsheets and papers on the DRC link this fragility to the Congo Wars and tend to avoid the inclusion of colonialism as one of the causes of such fragility. For example, we see:

Due in particular to the conflicts that have punctuated its history over the last two decades, the DRC is considered a fragile country.

(EC, 2014)

Or

⁵⁴ The DRC and the Great Lakes Region- Fiche de Survie – January 2011

The DRC's human development index is one of the lowest in the world (0.361 = 177th rank out of 179 countries according to the UNDP). All this is the consequence of decades of dictatorship under President Mobutu Sese Seko, followed by regional wars (1997 and 1998-2002) leading to the death of an estimated 4-5 million people. Today, the DRC can be considered as a fragile post-conflict state.

(EEAS, 2016)

As discussed in the previous chapter, this is a sign of “presentism” (Calligaro, 2015), where the EU is evoking a past to justify the present situation. But history itself is subject to a process of selection, where only that which is instrumental to the EU is relevant. Such accounts systematically fail to acknowledge that the structural weakness of Africa's states can be traced to the colonial era and the peculiar nature of the political institutions that were imposed on African societies by their colonisers (see Englebert and Tull, 2008). The notion of DRC as failed and fragile state has been adopted and internalised widely also by Congolese authors. It is worth mentioning the case of prominent Congolese professor of African Studies, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja. The author is a prominent voice of Congolese autonomous recovery and critic of external interventions in the country (see Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1998; 2004; 2006 among others). Besides his well-known scepticism regarding UN and EU interventions, his pan-African view on the conflict on the Great Lake region, Nzongola-Ntalaja makes use of the idea of Congo as failed state – such as in his exemplary paper on “The Failing State in the Democratic Republic of Congo” (2012) in which he attributing to this term a neutral and ahistorical sense proper of what Mignolo would call a ‘colonial grammar’.

There is a lot to unpack with regard to the concept of failed states. But in this context, it should mainly be considered that the very concept of fragile state, as used in the EU's peacebuilding in the DRC, embodies a colonial stereotype through which we analyse the DRC's state development based on the European nation-state blueprint. In this sense, the concept of fragility is influenced by what Qujano (2010) defines as a

colonial rationality/coloniality that orders the world in accordance with former colonial marks.

This idea of fragility or failure reinforces a sense of the DRC's marginality from the EU's progress and again represents the DRC in terms of absence (of a state, of peace) and therefore as a "terra nullius" to fill with *ad hoc* peacebuilding policies. Hence, the underpinning idea is that the DRC failed as a state and that the EU has to bring it back "on track".

In addition, it can also be argued that it is not only the peacebuilding policy aimed at recovering failed states that has a colonial bias but that the term 'failed states' contains a colonial assumption. At no point in the postcolonial era has the DRC looked like an ideal type of the modern European polity.

Therefore, the DRC seems failed even before starting a state-building process. As Englebert and Tull (2008) put it, "The evidence is overwhelming that most of Africa's collapsed states at no point in the postcolonial era remotely resembled the ideal type of the modern Western polity". As Patience Kabamba put it "the 'failed' state in Congo is not a reflection of Congolese 'underdevelopment'; it is what remains of the colonial state in Africa" (Kabamba, 2012). This invented perspective can also be the point of departure of a different analysis of the conflict. Indeed, instead of understanding Congolese as incapable of reaching a stable state, it considers that experienced and motivated Congolese actors will be able to rebuild their own country and overcoming the painful colonial burden (see also Bussy and Gallo 2016).

1.4. The EU's Burden

The notion that the African continent is still divided into distinct spheres of influence when it comes to EU crisis management is a recurring feature of the discursive representations expressed by the interviewees. There is an unwritten rule that assigns the leadership task of EU assistance to certain African countries to their former colonisers, and this is widespread within the different EU departments. In addition to this, some of the people that reflected on this 'unspoken rule' attributed to this racial connotation that recall the white man's burden and the moral legitimisation of the intervention. Others were rather legitimising this special relationship in

peacebuilding with more cultural arguments, linked with the idea of the Belgians as experts and interpreters of Congolese society and politics as shown in the previous chapter. Others were instead considered this only coincidental, thus undermining the relevance of this issue. However, when I was asking my interviewees to reflect on the reasons why Belgian officials were so involved in the EU peacebuilding missions in DRC, it is worth noticing that nine Officers answered by providing an argument that was based on a moral responsibility of the Belgians to act, even within the EU framework.

This updated version of the white man's burden is justified not only by cultural links and economic interest but also with regard to moral responsibility:

If the Belgians did not lead the EU coalition in Congo, the situation would have been worse, maybe a new genocide. So, you know on human rights they should tell us "congratulations", and being more objective. Because people do not want to see any former colony intervening in Africa. But we don't have another choice; we have to do it. It is a question of moral responsibility because nobody apart of France would intervene in Mali. And everybody would say to France: "Hey why don't you intervene?" And behind you have the Ruanda genocide. And after Rwanda, all Western country are reluctant to intervene in Africa. It is a moral responsibility. In Central Africa, they say: "This is your, France, this is your obligation". Is a sort of division of competences that is written nowhere. Somebody has to do the job. There is a lot of hypocrisies behind that because they are all fighting the former colony but when there is money to spend they always ask the former colony.

(Int. 34)

The former head of EUSEC also partly confirmed this picture:

There is a moral responsibility, if you have former colonies, to take care of them. And within the crisis bunch in the EU we do take care of these sensitivities and when choosing where to engage in operation we cannot deny that we have to see the bigger picture, and where our member states feel more the urge of intervening.

(Int. 35)

But the moral responsibility is not linked to the recognition of the past exploitation in the colonies, and therefore the need to act in the DRC is not seen as reparation. It is, on the contrary, associated with the need to be there again and to repeat the motherland-offspring relationship. In fact, when asked to clarify the concept of moral responsibility, the interviewees said that it comes from a sense of proximity, a shared memory, or:

It is a linked destiny. A linked history. We feel much closer to the countries we shared the same past. But it is not for reparation. We do not believe in reparation. This would be just one more pretext for Kabila to criticise Western powers and ask money at the same time, a tactic that, for instance, he has been employing for all the length of EUSEC.

(Int. 36)

In this respect, the idea of a linked destiny very much recalls the justification that Belgium gave to lead the international intervention in Congo, just after independence in 1960.

For example, in a letter addressed to Henry Spaak, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, one of his staff exposed that, in spite of the risk of being considered neo-colonialist or chauvinist, he asserted the Belgians were the only ones able to lead the international assistance of the Congo:

Mais à cet égard, je veux ne pas m'exposer de ta part au soupçon de "néo colonialisme ", encore moins de chauvinismes économique-politique. Il y a beau temps que je suis convaincu de la nécessité d'une large internationalisation des influences et des actions. Il faut s'y prêter, davantage : la favoriser. Cependant, le fait est là : pour le temps présent, c'est encore aux belges et à la Belgique qu'incombe, malgré qu'on en puisse avoir, le leadership de l'assistance sous ses diverses formes. Je dis: le leadership, non la charge totale, ni toutes les modalités, assurément. Mais la preuve est incontestablement faite - depuis trois ans et demi - que seuls des belges - ou ceux qui participent ou ont participé de l'action

*colonisatrice belge - sont, sauf de très rares exceptions, capables d'efficacité et susceptibles de crédit et de confiance quels que soient les coups durs qu'on ait encaissés.*⁵⁵

(HAEU, PHS-328_01)

1.5. The Lax and Warlike Congolese

As previously observed (chapter three and chapter four), many early Europeans' modes of representing Africans were based on a stereotypical basis that tended to diminish and criticise the colonised so as to rhetorically produce a common belief in the 'natural' inferiority and delinquency of native subjects and cultures.

These representations were sometimes made by conscious colonial propaganda that justified racial apartheid and allowed maintaining hegemonic control over territories under conquest. In other cases, dominant discourses were dispersed unconsciously by Western people, through spreading representations naturalised in the Western belief.

In the fifties, the views of European scientists were not substantially different. In 1954 Dr Carothers of the World Health Organisation declared that the African was the physiological equivalent of a European who had had a frontal lobotomy (Lister, 1997).

Such representations can easily be found for the Congolese in all the different phases of the Belgian occupation, and examples were provided in chapter four.

What is relevant in this discussion is that even after decolonisation, these hegemonic discourses persisted. This cemented and perpetuated what Mignolo (2010) calls coloniality of power: where our contemporary world arose from colonial differences.

⁵⁵ "But with this respect, I do not want to expose myself to the suspicion of "neo-colonialism", or of economic-political chauvinism. It has been a long time since I am convinced of the need for a broad internationalisation of influences and actions. It is necessary to lend to it, more: to favor it. However, the fact is there: for the present time, it is still to Belgians and to Belgium that is charged with the burden of the leadership of the assistance in its various forms, despite of its capability of being able to lead it. I say: leadership, not the total burden, or all the modalities, certainly. But the evidence is unquestionably made - for three and a half years - that only Belgians - or those who participate or have participated in the Belgian colonial action - are, with very rare exceptions, capable of efficiency and capable of reliability and confidence whatever rolling with the punches is needed". [author' own translation] HAEU, PHS-328_01. Letter from A.S.Gerard to P.H. Spaak, 1964

What is interesting for this chapter is to identify how much the European Community and the EU later took over the role of reproducing such representations. For instance, in the secret résumé of the meeting of 1964, during an *ad hoc* Committee on Congo, it is stated that it is important to remember that political opposition in Congo does not have any ideological feature, because they believe that blacks are not able to be a “faithful enemy”:

*Nous croyons qu'un semblant de calme pourrait être établi, grâce à une solution politique. Il ne faut pas oublier que ce qui sépare l'opposition du pouvoir n'a aucun caractère idéologique. On a pu dire des Noirs qu'ils sont fidèles dans leurs amitiés: ils ne le sont pas dans leurs inimitiés.*⁵⁶

(HAEU, PHS-334)

A characteristic that was constantly present in the way the Belgians described the Congolese is the representation of them as lax, negligent and careless. This mode of representation was intended to maintain hegemonic control over the Congolese, and the myth served to enslave and submit the Congolese to severe discipline. In the period of the Congo Free State, the infamous punishment for indigenous indolence was hand cutting or flagellation with the “chicotte”, a heavy leather whip. But severe corporal punishments from the white master remained praxis even after decolonisation, above all in the mining sector (see example in chapter five).

The idea of the Congolese as lax seems to remain present in the European description of activities in the field of cooperation and development.

Specifically, in several reports of the European Development Fund, there is always a reference to the indolence of the target population. Indeed, it is not rare to find statements such as « *Une gestion laxiste redressée* » or “*insuffisante discipline et volonté de travail de la main-d’oeuvre*”⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ “We believe that a semblance of calm could be established, thanks to a political solution. It must not be forgotten that what separates opposition from power is not ideological. It has been said that blacks are faithful in their friendships: they are not in their enmities” (author’s own translation) HAEU, PHS-334. Comité ad hoc sur l’Afrique. 25 Juin 1964

⁵⁷ « A lax management rectified » or « insufficient discipline and willingness to work of the workforce » [author own translation] HAEU, CCE INF.1982 157/82 Rapport de mission de contrôle du secteur “coopération et développement” au Congo du 21 au 26 juin 1982

Surprisingly, complaints about the indolence of the Congolese and the subsequent need to redeem them are still present. In a conversation with EU civil servants in charge of peacebuilding policies, some Policy Officers in the EUSEC Mission described their work and experiences in Kinshasa as follows:

First time I arrived in Kinshasa I was shocked seeing all the military doing nothing, just being sat in the main boulevard of this gigantic city. They do not have our spirit of initiative, and there is little we can do to change this. Of course, we can reopen the military schools, as we did in Katanga, we can rationalize human resources and give strategic advice, but they don't have the vision, I mean the vision of seeing the full project and contribute to it. They just don't like working, do not like challenges and putting efforts to achieve a goal.

(Int. 37)

Every time we tried to suggest them a better strategy in the army reform – like the brilliant idea to reform to the chain of payments - the first answer we had is that we are imposing something. But we don't want to impose anything. And in these circumstances, we had to raise our voice. Although I know it is a bitter defeat the fact that we have to raise our voice, but sometimes there are no alternatives.

(Int. 38)

When we started the mission, the local staff was paid monthly, but we quickly realised that they did not know how to save money and how to spend it rightly –most of them were dissipating money in alcohol – so we started paying them weekly and now we pay them every three days.

(Int. 39)

These interview statements show certain similarities with stereotypes inherited from the colonial period because they are regulated according to similar principles. As stated, colonial stereotypes are not always unifying and monolithic concepts.

The same can be said for the depiction of the Congolese by the EU peacebuilding officials. In their words, locals are considered indolent and lazy rather than proactive,

and also violent and warlike. In the following parts, for example, there is a reflection on the idea that the Congolese are not seeking peace:

[...] they don't want peace because they do not know how to live in a pacified country and they cannot profit from peace.

(Int. 40)

Sometimes I wonder if they actually want peace. The EU is investing enormously in peace efforts in Congo and after years what is the result? There are still several rebel groups at war, supported by the population. FDLR and Lord's Resistance Army, are still there. We can offer them a way forward but we cannot change their mind.

(Int. 41)

Such discursive instability, which was already seen as being part of all colonial discourses, is highlighted as a fundamental instance of the deployment of colonial authority. This does not imply that among the 62 interviewees contacted for this study, all referred to the Congolese as lax or warlike. Some interviewees used rather a more bureaucratic or technocratic language to approach the topic and did not mention any 'emotional' representation of the Congolese. However, it is important to notice that eleven of the interviewed – among which the extracts are present in this thesis – mentioned different linguistic variations of the same discourse, making it very representative for the topic under study.

Within the sample, it can be said that both the idea of lax and violent Congolese are functional to the EU's peacebuilding justifications: CSDP can have a heavy-handed implementation as it is the only one to "shake" the lax locals, but at the same time this might not work because the inner soul of Congolese is considered warlike.

In this context, it is worth recalling that these stereotypes are not limited to the EU discourses in DRC. We saw that in the case of the EU, some of the interlocutors were able to 'tag' the Congolese by making references to their common past, to historical ties. However, it is worth pointing out that such discourses, anchored in a racist matrix, have been widely documented also in the case of UN missions in the country. For instance, Iñiguez de Heredia (2012) considered that it is not uncommon to hear

UN officials and diplomats tagging Congolese as ‘corrupt’, ‘lazy’, ‘opportunistic’, ‘selfish’ or ‘backward’. She also considered how ‘bad-mouthing techniques’ had been instrumental to justify the indispensability of the MONUC mission (Ibid.). As in the case of this thesis, such stereotypes suggest that it is ultimately the fault of the Congolese, both elites and non-elites, for being in the situation they are. If we were to accept these complaints and critiques, we would immediately exonerate the interlocutors of their responsibility, acknowledging that they are doing their best. In this sense, we see that these colonial discourses are ‘travelling’ from the direct colonial master to be used in the broader language of the ‘developed’/peacebuilder. It is similar to the case described by Spivak in her understanding of ‘stretching’ the idea of colonial discourse and a method of theoretical analysis that goes beyond the traditional master/slave relationship and becomes a global ‘way of worlding’ towards words anchored in racist stereotypes (see Spivak, 1985 and Nichols, 2010).

Another important consideration is to be done for those colonial discourses that are not present. If, on the one hand, several important discourses seem to proceed along a line of continuity, we saw that others are not represented in the body of statements analysed. For instance, in the interviews performed and in the documents analysed, there has not been any trace of statements based on the role of ethnicities in Congo. As we saw in Chapter Five, Belgians had an important role in consolidating and transforming the mythology of ethnic difference, and several scholars considered that this is one of the causes of the conflict in DRC (see for instance Karbo & Mutisi, 2012). A possible explication of this might be found in what Autesserre (2012) considered about the discourses on interventions in DRC, claiming that certain discourses are not reproduced as they cannot be translated in easily applicable peacebuilding policy solutions for the international interveners.

But what is the impact of such discourse on peacebuilding? If the majority of people interviewed believe that the Congolese are lax or not proactive towards change, how can they draft and promote policies based on local ownership?

In the second half of the chapter, we will see how the reproduction and fixation of such colonial classificatory, discriminatory discourses have an impact on practices. It is argued that this process de-authorises the Congolese from their capacity of self-reliance and creates a much more top-down approach to peacebuilding, discarding the

relevance of a joint understanding of the projects, and leaving to locals the task of passively accomplishing the EU's diktat (receiving moneys, follow up army reforms, accept the SSR as the EUMS decided to implement it, etc.).

2. Double Standards in EU Peacebuilding Practices

There is a high probability that the descriptions of the Congolese as childish, immature and war-like, and needing to be redeemed and pushed by the Europeans to reach modernity and development, has an impact on the way peacebuilding practices are created.

The goal of this last section is to uncover to what extent a lack of reflection about colonialism (as seen in chapter six), and the persistence of colonial stereotypes in the EU's official statements, has an impact on peacebuilding practices as well.

Several authors already identified the asymmetry of power in international peacebuilding (see Mac Ginty, 2011; Richmond, 2002; Sabratnam, 2011 among others) and in chapter one an overview was provided relating to the academic debate on this. Here, I will draw on these authors to move the argument further and claim that such asymmetry in EU peacebuilding policies could be explained by the reproduction of a colonial knowledge within the peacebuilding system itself. This means that the colonial knowledge/power naturally permeates not only statements and standpoints of the EU officials but also directs their action while creating policies, and therefore has an impact on the way peacebuilding policies are created. Moreover, we can see how speeches and practices are mutually influencing themselves in the reproduction of colonial asymmetries, as the binomial power/knowledge is flowing towards the colonial discourse.

In so doing, I will show that the discursive strategies discussed in the previous section affect EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC in two ways: they maintain colonial bias in relation to the subject of colonialism (towards a marginalisation of the local) and in relation to the object of peacebuilding (towards the deployment of double standards).

2.1 The Marginalisation of the Local in EU Peacebuilding Policymaking

Chapter one emphasised the academic debate about the conceptual importance of “local involvement” in contemporary peacebuilding practices. It demonstrated that several scholars argue that the logic of peacebuilding is an “alien” form of rule to the local people (Sabaratnam, 2010: 3) and “alienating” (ibid) to the extent that it actively underestimates local efforts to reach an autonomous recovery. EU Studies engages in these debates in two ways: some scholars tend to emphasise the innovative bottom-up approach of the EU in peacebuilding (see Richmond, Björkdahl & Kappler, 2011) which is able to promote bottom-up peace due to its value-based role in the international sphere, whereas other scholars pinpoint EU peacebuilding shortfalls and its incapability of bringing true emancipatory peacebuilding (Rutazibwa, 2010).

Moving the debate further, this thesis intends to show that the shortfall in building what has been considered in the “emancipatory peace” (see Richmond, 2007 and 2011) might be associated with the discursive structure of EU peacebuilding practices that reflects colonial knowledge/power relations.

Finally, as already argued elsewhere (Rayroux and Wilén, 2014) despite an important discursive emphasis on ownership, the idea of local ownership itself seems a constructed concept. The concept of “local” is often mobilised by the EU as a panacea of legitimacy, even if we saw that a closer look reveals it is not really taken into account in the peacebuilding process.

Mobilising the example of EU peacebuilding in the DRC, we see in this final section that the stereotypes analysed previously were not only supporting and naturalising a colonial knowledge but also converting it into EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC, thereby reproducing the complex colonial discourse or what we could call the “colonial matrix of power”. Indeed, according to what I observed during the traineeship experience at the EEAS, and what resulted from the data gathering, the “local” is still marginalised and not taken into account in the process of making peacebuilding policies. I would argue that the discursive subjectification of the Congolese as infants, lax, violent, and “failed” has a strong impact in this process of marginalisation. The lack of European-like institutions and the lack of “peace” fix the

Congolese in a pre-modern status that excludes them from the ownership of the peace process.

There are several observations that are relevant here. First, the old practice of international policymakers gathering in Brussels to decide what is to be done about the DRC conflict without significant local representation continues unchanged. This is evident at the very beginning of the chain of peacebuilding when conducting the so-called “needs assessment” and the Recovery and Peace Building Assessments (RPBAs)⁵⁸.

While RPBAs are supposed to be undertaken by a range of actors, including national and local government representatives and members of civil society groups, local voices are hardly ever taken into account. A good example of this was provided during a conference on Conflict Analysis in Central Africa that took place on the 16th April 2016 in Brussels, organised by EEAS and DPKO. This event, which was considered very important for the EEAS (the whole team of the Central African Units was working to prepare this conference for four months), did not involve the presence of any local people.

Among the more than 50 people present (EEAS, ECHO, DEVCO, DPKO, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNDP, UNOCA, UNOLOPS, WEB and experts from Médecins Sans Frontières, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Mercy Corps and International Crisis Groups) there was no delegation from African Union states.

Another more recent example is the Humanitarian Conference on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) organised on 13 April 2018 by OCHA, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the EU. In this donor conference, the format is always “for donors

⁵⁸ The RPBA, previously known as Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) is a standardised mechanism that allows for identifying the underlying causes and impacts of conflict and crisis. It is used by the World Bank, the United Nations, and the European Union who have committed to providing joint support for assessing, planning, and mobilising efforts geared towards recovery, reconstruction, and development in countries affected by crises as part of the 2008 Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessment and Recovery Planning. RPBAs include both the assessment of needs and the national prioritisation and costing of these needs in an accompanying transitional results matrix. For more information see https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/fragility-and-crisis-management/analytical-tools_en

from donors”, completely excluding the voice of local authorities, political or social groups.

This approach is often justified by the importance of having a joint view among donors (mainly about EEAS/ECHO/DEVCO and DPKO/WEB) before meeting and listening to the recipient countries. In other words, *a priori idea* of the causes of the conflict is the precondition to actively listening to the local people. In such debates, Congolese subjectivity is assumed to be a nearly empty space, willingly subservient to European models and interests. The pedagogical discourse that we saw in the infantilisation strategy goes hand-in-hand with peacebuilding practices that also tend to infantilise and therefore marginalise local voices.

For the same reason, most of the debates within EEAS and DEVCO about Congo crises tend to drift into debates about the state and international intervention, and how peacebuilding and EU assistance can support local communities to achieve security, peace and well-being, without questioning what the “local” view is on this. Another problematic aspect is that EU practitioners often consider the “local partners” to be unreliable, and they, therefore, do not include them in the debates about peacebuilding.

This is the case in several civil society organisations that came to talk to the EEAS when I was doing my internship there. For instance, on 25 April 2016 the EEAS Central African division met delegates from AFC (*Alliance des Forces Congolaises*), a political movement of the Congolese diaspora, with a base in their home country and delegates in Belgium, Germany, France and England.

After the meeting, the EU Officials refrained from taking into consideration the requests and the political analysis of AFC’s delegates. According to them, this political movement was “not a reliable partner”. This attitude can be justified by the highly corrupt situation in the DRC, where locals are often complicit in the power interplay. However, we should consider that in the Congolese case there are also several actors that gave proof of certain independence – from the currently active groups FILIMBI and LUCHA to the more established ones such as the Catholic Church.

The silencing of the Congolese voice can also be attributed to the belief that the country is always welcoming external help. In other words, the precondition of any policymaking is that “locals” are willingly complicit to the EU and welcoming to the EU’s liberal peacebuilding.

During my stay at the EEAS, it became evident that the ownership of the peace process itself was never reclaimed by civil society organisations promoting the DRC’s recovery and representing local associations and movements. On the contrary, several delegates from political movements in the DRC, of local non-profit organisations, and delegates of the Congolese diaspora in Belgium, required consultations with the Head of Unit of the geographic desk at the EEAS to incisively ask for more intervention from the EU. During a meeting with delegates from the Congolese Diaspora Community in Belgium, several delegates requested more intervention from the EU to “save the Congo from Kabila” and “to have a stronger position against Kabila”⁵⁹.

Despite the fact that the EU’s documents do encourage consultation and engagement with locals, such claims have often been used as a justification that frees them from the incumbencies of seeking constant dialogue with them.

However, when examined more closely such an argument might also show the naturalisation of European power and hegemony of peace, rather than the validity of the EU peacebuilding architecture.

Despite the EU’s official claim for African ownership of the peace process, the lack of trust in locals – who are considered unreliable and incapable of autonomous recovery – might lead to a top-down approach in peacebuilding that is not sensitive to local needs.

This is also connected to the consideration that there is an intrinsic limit of EU understanding about peace in the DRC. This is not a new argument of course. We have previously seen that the DRC has been identified by the EU as a “test case” for peace

⁵⁹ Meeting with Representatives of Civil Society and Political Associations from Congolese Diaspora in Belgium 8 April 2016, EEAS.

operations, and the huge financial investments that have been made might be used in part to test its capacities as a peacebuilding actor.

In this sense, Rutazibwa (2010) speaks about ‘Intervener-Centric Mechanisms’ within EU policies, where the EU is more concerned about its own image and performance rather than about the outcomes of peacebuilding policies for the recipient country. Rayroux and Wilén (2014) also point to EU interventions where the *raison d’être* is more likely to be found in the different donors’ interests than in the DRC’s need for reform.

The exclusion of locals from the analysis of the conflict, the lack of consideration for locals’ perspectives and their identification as unreliable, and the *a priori* legitimacy of acting as peacebuilder are all factors that contribute to creating policies where local ownership is not taken into account enough. This creates marginalisation that excludes the DRC from its own peace process.

Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that not only are the locals marginalised by EU peacebuilding but the idea of local *per se* might be considered an empty concept.

For example, during the conference on “Lake Chad: Strategic Reflection”⁶⁰ the importance of a local approach was stressed by all participants. However, not one of the speakers had a clear idea of what mattered at the local level. This could lead us to consider that the EU uses the reference to DRC “locals” in a way that Spivak calls a catachresis: a master term that claims to represent a group but has no literal referent (Spivak 1993: 139). When included in the papers and strategies, local ownership appears as a fixed image. In this sense, such marginalisation and contemporary calls for ownership are also very similar to the colonial way of administrating. Bhabha, for example, explains that the colonial power was never fully operative alone, in his being unilateral, but has always been “hybrid”. This implies an agential capacity of the native subjects. As with Foucault’s notion that there is no power without resistance, for Bhabha agency is possible only when the colonised are operating. But this enablement is within the discursive ambit of the coloniser’s power (see also Kapoor,

⁶⁰ “Lake Chad Strategic Reflection” Conference hosted at the EEAS on the 4 March 2016.

2003 and Malreddy, 2015). Thus, EU peacebuilding practitioners need the engagement of the locals to make sense of what they are doing but only to the extent that it remains within a framework of action delimited by the EU.

2.2. Conditionality

What has been considered so far sheds light on an asymmetry in EU peacebuilding *vis à vis* the recipients of such policies in the DRC? Yet, when taking a closer look the asymmetry of power invades not only the subject of peacebuilding but the policy itself. As we saw in chapter three, the ideological underpinning that binds donors and recipients together might be identified in the concept of conditionality. Conditionality has enabled the EU to demand the implementation of certain standards of behaviour from Africa (Sepos 2013; Tzifakis 2007), whose application would have allowed the EU to “transmit elements of its domestic order beyond the EU borders” (Stivachtis, 2015:89).

This ideological position can be traced in the DRC peacebuilding policies, where the EU often warns the country about the possible use of Art. 8 (establishment of political dialogue on human rights issues, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance.) and Art. 96 (Consultation procedure and possible measures) of the Cotonou Agreement.

The DRC has to accept the ideological programme of the EU and carry out serious structural reforms in order to get the EU’s donations and conflict recovery or assistance programmes. In the story of the DRC, the EU has used this instrument extensively. For example, the EU suspended peacebuilding aids (and development cooperation more in general) for the DRC from 1992 to 2002 because of the lack of progress in the political democratisation process, the high degree of corruption, economic mismanagement, and differences between EU Member States’ policies towards the country. During this period, the EU maintained humanitarian aid funded by the DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection but did not invest in political or security-related cooperation.

One of the points to consider is that even if the EU side is also subject to a range of possible criticisms, it does not have to comply with any standard in peacebuilding and

its actions are rarely judged and questioned from the recipient countries. Following questions that McGinty and Richmond (2013) have already asked about the unilateral assumptions of peacebuilding, we should indeed ask: for whose interests does the EU operate? Are its institutions capable? Is its involvement in DRC affairs democratic and accountable? Where does its legitimacy arise from and how is its authority connected to the representation of its many subjects? Are the personnel who work in EU peacebuilding in the DRC suitably qualified and aware of the range of ethical, methodological, as well as political and social issues that go along with their role? Are they aware of the historical power relations they are implicated in?

The fact that such questions are never addressed to the EU, but at the same time a strong conditionality is required in DRC policy, reaffirms for many that conditionality is a unilateral tool. Moreover, not only is the EU never questioned in its action, but the moral stance and judgments that the EU wants to normatively spread are only applied in a selective manner.

For instance, in March 2016 the EU used Articles 8 and 96 from the Cotonou Agreement to suspend direct financial support to the Burundian administration due to a surge in politically-motivated violence and set out specific measures to be taken by the Burundian government that could lead to the resumption of full cooperation. In this context, in several meetings within COAFR about the escalation of violence in the DRC, practitioners from the Commission and EEAS asked for the application of the same Articles 8 and 96 to face the crisis in Kinshasa.

However, the economic interests that most of the countries have in the DRC influenced the EU in its decision not to apply the conditionality. Long discussions about this topic in COAFR always culminated in opposition to any form of more effective measures to stop violence in the DRC. I have personally witnessed such debates in COAFR, where Belgium, in particular, was strongly opposed to any sanction.

This explains the often-debated idea that conditional measures are applied selectively, to the extent that they are in the EU's interests, and not reflections on conflict solutions to tip the scale.

Such “cosmetic conditionality” (The Courier ACP-EU, 2003) maintains a structure of discourse in which the EU is the only decision-maker and leaves no space for the DRC in deciding on political consultation and possible suspension of aid. Moreover, it also follows the colonial mindset in the way it is interested in a form of “social technology” (the idea of shaping the recipient country) but only to the extent that the very help is functional to the self-interest of the EU.

This echoes what Ziai writes about the discursive order of development. He believes that development is structured with a discourse that takes place from the point of view of the North to objectively prove the inferiority of the Other (Ziai, 2015:33). Therefore, no measurement of development has ever tried to operationalise hospitality, crime, suicide, social networks or a non-instrumental relationship to nature, as indicators of a good society (Ibid). It is a unilateral monologue, that takes place also in the case of conditionality.

Indeed, the double standards that conditionality highlights do not only mark the unilateral imposition of conditions from the EU to the DRC, which have often been the connotation of the colonial rationale of ordering and nurturing the colonial subject according to normative standards by using ‘sticks and carrots’.

Political conditionality is increasingly disputed and criticised also by African governments and by representatives of African civil society. As already argued by Fioramonti (2009), the fact is that EU conditionality has always been contested by African political elites, but this state of affairs became dramatically evident during the Africa-EU summit in December 2007, when the head of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konaré, expressed a widespread feeling among African leaders by arguing that “there are problems of governance, but Africans themselves have to sort these out, to tackle them head on” (Konaré, 2007 as quoted in Fioramonti, 2009). Similarly, professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Chair of the Cluster session for the Consultation of African Civil Society Organizations, argued that Africans must be co-definers of conditionality measures as “there is no basis for Africa to accept conditions that are predetermined by others” (African Union 2007).

These statements reveal a growing discomfort at the AU level with the negative measures of democracy promotion. Such a critical perspective is, however, not shared

by all African authors. Congolese Professor Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, while proclaiming the failure of the international peacebuilding efforts in DRC (Dizolele, 2014) also considers that donors' investments in DRC's transition "will have gone to waste if donors do not provide adequate oversight and place conditions on their aid" (2010:156) and he adds "they have been quick to dole out carrots, but unwilling to wield their sticks. If the international community were to invest in institution-building rather than propping up an individual, the DRC would have a far greater chance of establishing a true democracy" (Ibid.).

Other scholars consider that political determination of promoting democracy and human rights certainly seem less forthcoming when the EU's interests are in danger. EU scholars have critically considered conditionality with this regard. Stivachtis, for instance, demonstrates that the EU constitutes a modern form of empire in which conditionality contributes towards the strengthening of an international order that reflects the EU's interests and values (ibid).

Similarly, Rutazibwa (2010) considers that the origin of the logic of conditionality between the EU and the ACP group resides in the fact that the EU is presenting a parochial humanitarian telos as universal, and the EU set, therefore, assumes a moral superiority to guide Africa.

In this sense, this chapter has integrated such approaches and moved them forward by assimilating the historical view on conditionality (discussed in Chapter 4) and seeing it not as a new or modern rationale of intervention, but an institutionalised way of reproducing the donor/recipient divide that stems from a historical legacy.

Conclusion

The absence of an in-depth rethinking of European colonial history and of the postcolonial present lead to a general reproduction of a colonial epistemology in the EU peacebuilding practices in the DRC. The analysis of discourses on peacebuilding in the DRC demonstrate that such epistemology still structures the discourses in traditional dichotomist relations that conjure up such notions as centre vs. margin, peaceful vs. violent, master/knowledgeable vs. infant/recipient. These dichotomies continue to fix representational regimes according to which “northern/EU” are cast hierarchically above “southern/DRC” spaces and identities.

Just as colonialism was based upon the construction and maintenance of borders between coloniser and colonised, so peacebuilding is built and given meaning through boundaries between expert/adult/developed/peaceable EU peacebuilding practitioners and immature/child/warlike/underdeveloped Congolese.

The stereotypical caricature of the binary opposites that support the discourse makes it powerful and pervasive: its meanings and values appear intuitive and natural. It creates a code for the peacebuilding discourse and a set of values and hierarchies. Such stereotypical modes of representation connote rigidity and an unchanging order based on a fixed donor/recipient binary order and at the same time provides a space of ambivalence and instability within the discourse itself. The discursive instability has been connoted as a fundamental instance of the deployment of the EU’s authority in peacebuilding as it creates a set of possibilities functional to the EU’s justifications.

What is more, these dichotomies have become meaningful and tangible through constant application in the creation of peacebuilding practices, and this chapter highlights the double standards that such policies create. In particular, it demonstrated that the binary discourses reflect a reality in which the recipient of peacebuilding policies is not only considered discursively inferior but is also marginalised in peacebuilding practices. Silenced in the discourses as childish and young, the Congolese are also not properly taken into account in the process of policymaking.

Conclusion

Introduction

The central objective of this thesis has been to analyse the legacies of colonial discourse within the European Union's policymaking on peacebuilding, by answering the research question: How can postcolonial and decolonial theory help us understand the dominant discourses and politics that frame the EU construction of peacebuilding practices in the DRC?

In answering this question, the research has discovered that within EU peacebuilding policymaking towards the DRC, the European colonial legacy is mostly neglected; however, in addition to "colonial amnesia", it is possible to highlight a "presentist regime" of historicity (Calligaro, 2005) where selective accounts of colonial memory are mobilised to legitimise EU peacebuilding actions. Moreover, these findings have determined that the omission of the European colonial past as a consideration may have contributed to determining continuities of colonial discourse in this context. Indeed, the thesis demonstrates that EU peacebuilding discourse is still regulated by an underlying colonial discourse which has a generative effect on EU peacebuilding policymaking itself. The research identified discursive strategies that reproduce colonial discourses in EU peacebuilding policy-making. These strategies, mainly based on racial stereotypes, connote an unchanging order based on a fixed donor/recipient binary.

This concluding chapter first lays out the key elements of the theoretical framework conceptualised in this dissertation and the contributions this framework brings to the academic debate. Second, it presents, in light of the theoretical framework developed, the main empirical findings. Finally, it reflects on the insights drawn from these findings and on the possible further research that could be done, building on this thesis.

1. Rethinking EU Peacebuilding

The thesis began with an analysis of the debate around colonialism vis-à-vis EU and EU Peacebuilding Studies and demonstrated that these fields have historically neglected Europe's colonial past and, at the same time, have been rooted in a Eurocentric perspective that portrays the EU as a unique value-led force in international relations.

Despite this trend in the literature, recent developments show that EU and peacebuilding scholars are more and more interested in discovering the present manifestations of the colonial past. Therefore the thesis mobilized, as a foundation for the discussion, the studies about the EU's colonial legacy (Kiernan, 1982; Dimier, 2014; Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; Nicolaïdis, K., & Sèbe, 2014; Pasture, 2015) and about peacebuilding's colonial roots (Chandler, 2010d; Charbonneau, 2014; Lidén, 2011; Rutazibwa, 2010; Sabaratnam, 2013 among others). With the insights from this rich theoretical foundation, the thesis explained the importance of maximising insights from postcolonial and decolonial scholars in order to better understand the intrinsic presence of colonial structures in the international system, and consequently, to reposition the EU within such a historical framework.

It is from this meaningful conjunction of decolonial and postcolonial theories that the theoretical perspective of this thesis is derived, in the interest of using both the postcolonial 'discursive' understanding – more inspired by poststructuralist analysis – and the useful decolonial framework of the 'coloniality of power'. Taking the conjuncture of those two scholarly traditions compels this research to embrace intellectual resistance to the forms of epistemological and material dominance disseminated by the colonial order and to make them manifest in the specific case analysed in the thesis.

It is, indeed, thanks to the postcolonial framework that it is possible to grasp the extent of the colonial underpinnings of the European project. This allows us not to take EU peacebuilding discourses as neutral but to commit to the critical scrutiny of EU peacebuilding policymaking discursive production, in order to analyse the extent of colonial continuities and, ultimately, to challenge and disrupt such discourses.

In order to undertake a postcolonial analysis of present EU peacebuilding initiatives, the thesis mobilised the concept of colonial discourse, which is central to such postcolonial analysis (see Bhabha, 1994 and Said, 1978, among others). This concept is influenced by a Foucauldian/poststructuralist understanding of discourse, which no longer refers to formal linguistic aspects or a mere system of linguistic signs, but as a practice that systematically constructs the subjects and the worlds of which they speak, contributing to creating a regime of truth (Foucault, 1971; 1972; 1976). In this sense, colonial discourse can be seen as a way in which colonial knowledge is produced and reproduced as a “system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998: 42).

Colonial discourse is produced by an authority possessing the power to make pronouncements on an object: the coloniser over the colonised typically, acknowledging a certain elasticity of the two terms (see Spivak, 2003). This power is exerted in a discursive way, by creating a one-sided discourse, or what decolonial scholars might refer to the epistemic ‘matrix of power’. This is considered in the literature as a way of constructing ‘the other’ through binary oppositions and reproducing an order that normalises a unidirectional flow of power/knowledge from the colonial/master to the colonised/subject.

The study attempted to translate the concept of colonial discourse into a proper methodology of research by mobilizing the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) influenced by Colonial Discourse Theory. By doing so, it operationalised the concept of colonial discourse and it provided a methodological tool for the undertaken analysis. The thesis also explained how the methodology has been used in the main sources of the investigation: interviews, participant observation, archival research, and document analysis.

Having established the theoretical and methodological foundations, the thesis provided a historical overview of the significance of conceiving the colonial past not only as linked to individual European former colonial powers, but as a collective European issue and as such, as an essential part of history that should form part of the EU’s collective memory. In doing so, the thesis provides a historical detour on colonialism framed as a European phenomenon, in order to show how colonialism is fundamentally linked with the birth of the European Union project.

Based on extensive archival work; in-depth interviews with conducted with 62 EU officials working on peacebuilding policies interviews conducted from April to December 2015 and from March to August 2016; and six months of participant observation at the Central African Division of the European External Action Service (EEAS); the main finding of this enquiry is the recognition of two main interlinked discursive strands: the one concerning the irrelevance of colonial history for EU peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the other admitting a positive legacy of colonialism in ongoing peacebuilding in DRC.

Furthermore, the thesis investigated the structure of the EU peacebuilding discourse, and identified that this is still regulated by colonial discourse. The study pinpoints several discursive strategies that sustain such order of discourse. These strategies are mainly based on racial stereotypes towards the recipients of EU peacebuilding policies: the idea of Congolese as backward, infantile, lax, and violent, and of the DRC as a pre-modern, failed country.

Such stereotypes fix and naturalise a ‘coloniality of power’ based on a fixed donor/recipient binary, with the result being the creation of peacebuilding practices that marginalise the local and exert power through conditional peacebuilding.

2. Contributions to the Existing Literature

i. Theoretical Contributions

The main theoretical contribution of the thesis was to provide a bridge between Postcolonial and Decolonial approaches and EU Peacebuilding Studies. This move opens the possibility to pushing the academic debate further, as this research represents the first analysis of EU Peacebuilding using this lens.

Indeed, despite the welcome addition of numerous new studies on the topic of the postcolonial EU (Adler-Nissen, 2013; Nicholaidis, 2014; among others) and postcolonial peacebuilding (Jabri, 2013; Liden, 2014; Sabaratnam, 2011 among others), so far the field of EU peacebuilding has never been considered through a postcolonial lens. Combining insights from postcolonial and EU Studies leads to a

more nuanced understanding of the EU peacebuilding role and to question the universality of the values the EU is willing to bring in peacebuilding policies.

A postcolonial and decolonial perspective explains why EU peacebuilding policies based on Eurocentric norms struggle to free themselves of paternalistic discourses about the recipients of such policies. By inscribing EU values and norms into a broader historical dimension, a postcolonial and decolonial approach challenges the modernity/coloniality/rationality that is carried by the EU's discourse in conflict interventions. In other words, this bridge opens the door to a possible rethinking of some of the pernicious assumptions that the EU has inherited from colonial times, and that is still present in the way the EU approaches conflict resolutions.

At the same time, the use of the EU case brings a practical application of the theories offered by post/decolonial studies, that often tend to be too anchored in the past (see 2014 Nicolaïdis & Sébe, 2014; Paone, 2017) and to sometimes be limited to the abstract level. This has also been one of the major challenges of the thesis: providing a practical and accountable analysis of the modern day presence of colonial discourses, following the call for pursuing this research initiated by several authors. For instance, Merlingen acknowledged:

The temporal structure of EU governmentality is analogous to the temporal structure of colonial-era discourse orders. Continuities, subtleties and ambiguities in how the EU and its theatres of operations stand to each other are black-boxed. Future research could systematically and in empirical detail compare CSDP governmentality and colonial-era governmentalities. This would go a long way towards unmasking the hidden continuities between these different discourse orders. This point has been documented empirically in relation to international interventions in general but not with regard to CSDP missions.

(Merlingen, 2012: 201)

Accepting the challenge presented by Merlingen, alongside Hansen (2014), and Pasture (2015), this research embarked on the task of charting a set of historical connections between the colonial *mission civilisatrice* and the EU normative power's

representations in peacebuilding policymaking. This served as a vivid case study for postcolonialism, with the conviction that it is of key importance not only to consider the forms of resistance to nowadays coloniality but also to dig into the way in which the colonial project is maintained in the discursive reproduction of power/knowledge discourses.

Therefore, the major contributions that the use of the 'EU case study' brings to post/decolonial studies is the possibility of providing practical examples of the avenues to which EU discursive continuity allows the persistence of coloniality. This has been done by emphasising the discursive legitimations of peacebuilding by the EU – rather than the forms of resistance to coloniality – bringing a unique viewpoint to the post/decolonial literature. In other words, the contribution that the EU case study brings to post/decolonial scholarship is the one that is more concerned in 'demythologising' the *civilising mission* of the EU peacebuilding, rather than in 'desilencing' the recipient's voices.

ii. Methodological Contributions

Despite the importance of the concept of 'colonial discourse' as elaborated by Colonial Discourse Theory, the application of this theoretical lens into the empirical research has been often quite unsystematic and broadly interpretative, without having a clear reference of how to analyse colonial discourse in practice. Thus, so far, postcolonial and decolonial analyses of discourse have not been accompanied by a clear methodological 'toolkit' that allows for translating the conceptualisation into a methodological analysis of reality.

While this problem might be not so relevant for studies about colonial times – as the presence of a discursive colonial ideology is more evident – the analysis of the manifestation of colonial discourses in the contemporary international system can pose more problems. It is for this reason that the thesis conceptualized and applied a Discourse-Historical Approach influenced by Colonial Discourse Theory. This 'marriage' of critical discourse analysis approach with the more interpretative colonial discourses theory allowed the research to operationalise the concept of colonial discourse and to retrace it in contemporary international relations. By so doing, the

thesis seeks to establish a foundation for all scholars interested to look at the discursive manifestation of colonial legacies into modern day politics.

iii. Historical Reconstructions

This thesis provided a historical rearticulation of EU peacebuilding, towards a reconstruction of the colonial underpinning of the EU as a subject and of peacebuilding as a policy. The study challenged the assumption that peacebuilding is a new technical tool employed by the EU only in the last decade, and it demonstrated that the EU's ethical responsibility to facilitate Africa's peace has long been embedded in the relationship with Africa and indeed, mostly entangled with colonial aspirations.

By providing an overview of colonialism as a European phenomenon, and by showing that it is fundamental to conceive of the EU as an institution that has been funded on colonial bases, the thesis presented the importance of retracing the idea of peacebuilding within the European project of bringing peace to Africa. In so doing, the thesis demonstrated how the discourse of bringing peace to Africa has evolved from European Integration to the present, showing the fractures in the discourse, but also the continuities that flowed into modern day peacebuilding policymaking.

3. Key Empirical Findings

Looking into the relevance of colonial legacies in the contemporary discourse and practice of EU peacebuilding in the DRC, I found that there are two major dimensions in which the EU's officials working on peacebuilding in DRC articulate colonial legacy: a dehistoricised and ambivalent use of the colonial memory and the reproduction of colonial discourse.

i. A Dehistoricised and Ambivalent Use of the Colonial Memory

The empirical analysis has shown that within the European External Action Service and in the European Commission the erasure of colonialism is still in place. This 'colonial amnesia', has been demonstrated in the thesis by the individuation of two interlinked discursive strands: the first one concerns the complete disregarding of colonial history for EU peacebuilding in DRC. Indeed, EU officials are mostly convinced that the history of colonialism has no relevance for the EU. This discourse is anchored in the idea that the EU and Member States are two irreconcilable historical entities, and that the EU should not be accountable for the past of individual member states.

The second, interlinked, discursive strand that has been traced in the interviews is the actual belief of a positive legacy of colonialism in current peacebuilding in DRC. In this sense, Belgium's role within EU peacebuilding in DRC was portrayed as very important in the way Belgians still represent and interpret their former colony. Therefore, colonial ties are considered relevant opportunities for peacebuilding practices.

Such discursive strands, apparently contradictory, confirm the presence of colonial discourse and its instability. Such discursive strands are composed by ambivalent and unstable utterances, which nonetheless reproduce and naturalise a "regime of truth" (Foucault, 2003 [1976]) in which colonialism is silenced but reproduced in the promotion of the former coloniser's role in the present.

Indeed, the ambivalence of forgetting the colonial past but saving the 'positive legacy' could be considered as part of the colonial rationale that donates to the master subject

the possibility of creating regimes of truth which can be ambivalent and contradictory, as they are instrumental to the continuation of a colonial discourse that reproduces power/knowledge asymmetries between peacebuilder and recipient.

ii. The Reproduction of Colonial Discourse

Relying on the results of interviews and participant observation, the research focused on finding continuities or discontinuities of colonial discourse in EU peacebuilding policymaking. With this goal, the study unmasked hidden continuities between the structure of colonial discourse and the one of EU peacebuilding policy-making. The analysis of discourses on peacebuilding in the DRC proves that a colonial epistemology is supported by a series of discursive strategies.

The discursive strategies encountered are mainly based on a racialised order of discourse, underpinned by stereotypes about the donor and recipients of peacebuilding: the idea of Congolese as backward, infantile, lax, violent, and of the DRC as a pre-modern, failed country, as well as the idea of the EU's moral responsibility and burden to bring peace. Such stereotypes naturalise the dichotomist relationship between EU and the DRC, based on asymmetric power relations, typical of a colonial matrix of power. They conjure up such notions as centre vs. margin, peaceful vs. violent, master/knowledgeable vs. infant/recipient. These discursive strategies strengthen an order of discourse structured in the traditional dichotomist relation that continues to fix representational regimes according to which 'northern/EU' is cast hierarchically above 'southern/DRC' spaces and identity. The reproduction of a colonial discourse within EU peacebuilding policymaking towards the DRC reproduces continuity of moral and civilisation divide.

What is more, the research shows that these dichotomies have become tangible through constant application in the creation of peacebuilding practices, and the thesis shows the double standards that such policy creates. In particular, the study demonstrates that the binary discourses reflect a reality in which the recipient of peacebuilding policies is not only considered discursively inferior, but it is also marginalised in peacebuilding practices.

This does not leave much margin to autonomous ownership and appropriation of the peace process by the recipients, which is supposed to be the final goal of peacebuilding practices.

Such reproduction of colonial discourse might be due to the absence of a deep rethinking of the European colonial history and of the consequences that this could entail in peacebuilding policies. Indeed, I would consider that it is the much-uncontested nature of the EU, who never faced its own colonial past in relations to the ‘others’, as well as the uncontested idea of “bringing peace”, that generate a continuity of colonial discourse.

Peacebuilding policies, undertaken with noble intentions by benevolent practitioners, do not suffice to generate good outcomes. On the contrary, rather than bringing solutions to a conflict, peacebuilding may impose a cost on the recipients: it may reinforce marginalisation, inequalities, and perpetuate asymmetric power relations.

Indeed, the reproduction of colonial discourse in peacebuilding is detrimental to the fulfilment of peacebuilding goals.

4. Decolonising Peacebuilding? Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

By offering a postcolonial analysis of the discourses around EU peacebuilding policies towards the DRC, this thesis contributed to the debate on EU peacebuilding by placing an emphasis on the colonial underpinnings of peacebuilding discourses. The thesis shows that the EU peacebuilding policies are projected to fail not only as a result of their practical shortcomings but also due to technical problems internal to the EU peacebuilding framework, as many EU scholars pointed on (see for instance Gross, & Juncos, 2010; Tocci, 2004 and 2007; Youngs, 2004).

Indeed, this investigation exposes the limitation of such policy-oriented approaches, by showing the deeper deficiencies of the underlying principles of the EU peacebuilding. Even if policy-oriented approaches might have some short term positive effects in proposing a more “emancipatory” form of conflict resolution (see for instance Björkdahl, A. Richmond, O. & Kappler, S. (2009) on the post-liberal

peacebuilding agenda for the EU) they would not undermine the essential principles upon which the peacebuilding regime is based.

Therefore, the conducted research does not aim at extracting prescriptive solutions to correct the EU peacebuilding approach. Rather, it suggests that if we want to take conflict resolution seriously, it is first and foremost important to disanchor the EU peacebuilding doctrine from its very underlying colonial principles.

Thus, the thesis provides the first step towards this change, by offering the extrication of colonialism from the EU peacebuilding regime. It shows the discursive strategies and the colonial stereotypes that allow the reproduction of racial stratification in the EU peacebuilding discourses.

Only a revision of the dehistoricised imprinting in which the EU was created and a disruption of colonial continuities can dismantle the hierarchical conception of subjectivities premised on the primacy of the European liberal self as against others.

4.1 Reflecting on Limitations

Writing a thesis is an inevitable process of selection. This means that it is not possible to give space to all the interesting perspectives that this topic could have allowed. Unfortunately, every selection necessarily implies a limitation; but, at the same time, it also opens avenues for further investigations.

The first limitation of this thesis derives primarily from the methodological choice of focusing only on EU discourses and only interviewing EU practitioners.

From the very beginning, the thesis asserted that it wanted to contribute to the post/decolonial debate by showing continuity of colonialism in the way EU officials talk, discuss, and produce peacebuilding policies. This inevitably might not fully do justice to the idea of connectivity that the postcolonial intervention wants to provide – specifically by not bridging enough the EU discourses with the counter-discourses of the peacebuilding policies' recipients. In this case, further avenues of research could look at how the Congolese view the colonial legacies in EU peacebuilding, allying more to these scholarships that analyse local perspective on peacebuilding (see for instance Sabaratnam, 2011).

The second selection that has been done was the decision of focusing more on discourses on peacebuilding policymaking and less on the practices of peacebuilding in DRC. Consequently, we could probably argue that from this selection originates another limitation: the fact that this research remains confined into the deconstruction of the discursive sphere, without looking in detail at how the EU practices on the ground match such discourse.

4.2 Towards a Decolonial Peace

Most importantly, perhaps, this research opens up avenues for reconceptualising the concept of peacebuilding in general and the EU role in the promotion of world peace more specifically. Indeed, once we realised that colonial discourse is still embedded in peacebuilding, it comes naturally to reflect on the very existence of peacebuilding and on the legitimacy of the EU role as a peace promoter. Some questions arise: is it possible for the EU to change its discursive position? Is ‘peacebuilding’ a concept that we need to keep or are we free to discard it? Is it possible to conceive of a non-liberal/non-normative peacebuilding, and if so what would that look like? Has the EU anything normatively positive to offer? What would it actually mean for the EU to ‘come to terms with’ or ‘address’ its colonial legacy?

Indeed, exposing ‘colonial amnesia’ and the manifestations of colonial discourse within EU peacebuilding is only the first step towards the change. This thesis raises awareness about the colonality of power that the EU is maintaining, and it points out that decolonisation has been a very much unfinished project, and the discursive production of the EU seems an attempt to hold on the colonial status quo.

This ultimately led me to think about to the extent to which peacebuilding itself it is complicit and partakers in or ever embodies colonality of power in its very existence. As it has been explored in several sections of this thesis, certain African authors see that the African postcolonial world has remained hostage to radically asymmetrical power relations that developed during the colonial encounters of the fifteenth century. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). They link the current permanence of conflict to the colonial experience and consider that the only way forward is the “de-linking” (Amin, 1990; 2009) from a modernist grammar of peace and development discourses over Africa. If

some western authors are hearing the voices of such scholars, others are still very much concerned about building a top-down structure.

Taking the case of DRC, in the last few years, the debate was monopolised by the dictates of establishing elections as the main solution to Congo's troubles. An exemplar in this sense is the piece on "Congo's Inescapable State" (Stearns, Vlassenroot, Hoffmann, and Carayannis, 2017) in which these authors argue that only elections and top-down institutional reforms can solve Congo's problems, believing that as global, regional, and national tensions drive the ongoing violence, a local, bottom-up conflict resolution is largely unnecessary.

On the contrary, in charting the history of the Congo's own democratic traditions, Nzongola-Ntalaja argues that outside intervention has not assisted Congolese to achieve peace. Rather, outsider interventions have been detrimental to the unity of the Congolese democracy movement, and to the consolidation of autonomous roads to peace. With regards to the EU, he states that money and troops deployed in the country did not help the peacebuilding process, and could have been allocated differently (2006). Nzongola-Ntalaja argues elsewhere for the autonomous self-recovery of the Congolese, by saying that EU and UN money and missions cannot deliver peace and stabilisation as "the salvation of Congo lies in the hands of her own sons and daughters," (2016) .

It is from the intersection of this thesis' findings about the coloniality of power present in EU peacebuilding practices on the one hand and the call from African and Congolese authors from 'less international intervention' that we need to locate the call and the need to decolonise peacebuilding.

But is it possible to conceive of a 'decolonial peacebuilding'? According to Zondi (2017) and Grosfoguel (2009), a decolonial peace implies the pursuit of peace in a manner that also deals with the colonial continuities in the nature of their inherited state, with the underlying paradigm of war and violence, a coloniser model of the world and its colonial political economy.

In this sense, a decolonial peacebuilding is the one that first takes seriously the concept of autonomous recovery, already proposed by Weinstein (2005) and rearticulated by Rutazibwa (2013). Rutazibwa proposes an autonomous recovery

framework that addresses how the international community might be an impediment to the construction, restoration or conservation peace and stability.

This raises serious questions about the salience of peacebuilding and a call to reconsider it could be organised in such a way that its damage is minimal. In the case of DRC, the history of the country showed important Congolese peoples' own democratic traditions that could lead to autonomous peace.

For instance, Nzongola-Ntalaja considers the case of the Sovereign National Conference (Conférence Nationale Souveraine - CNS), an institution that since 1991 brought together delegates from different regions, association, political parties, alongside civil society organisations, traditional leaders, the Congolese in the Diaspora, and guest speakers from the intelligentsia. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2004 and 2006) the CNS established the crucial building blocks of Congolese peace and democracy: helped people to shed their fears of the dictatorship, gave greater impetus to the culture of freedom and political discourse, and promoted the right to discuss public affairs freely and to criticise the government, with the consolidation of independent press, the increasing clout of civil society, and the growth of popular forms of political debate and organisation have all increased the capacity to resist authoritarianism and oppressive rule. However, the same author also considers that every time a popular democratic movement was emerging in DRC, European powers were not there to support it (Ibid., 2006).

A decolonial peace would thus be the one that listens to these voices. This would entail being prepared to rid the system of ideologies and practices that systematically constructed peacebuilding as a means of maintaining global inequality. At the same time, a decolonial peace would maintain the interest to fight for peace, conceiving a peace process that is aware of contributing to global justice, solidarity and reparations for the long-lasting inequalities. As Rutazibwa (2018) considers we need to be ready to abandon concepts as 'development, 'aid', or 'peacebuilding' and to seriously consider also getting rid of the respective academic disciplines, as such concepts are 'steeped in a hierarchized understanding of the world, reveal themselves as highly problematic and inadequate to organizing our thinking on the betterment of people's lives". (2018: 172).

Finally, it is important to ask ourselves: in view of a possible decolonial peace delinked from peacebuilding, what would be the role of the EU?

The fundamental image of the EU as a model for peace, which is still reproduced in peacebuilding policies, clashes monumentally with a present in which the EU is more and more a project of exclusion. Difference and pluralities are less and less accepted at the heart of Europe, whereas at its borders physical and cultural fences are rejecting those people looking for the mirage of the “*pax Europaea*”.

The thesis so far allowed to make us understand what Peo Hansen considered in relation to the refugee crisis (2015): it is time to see Europe as part of the problem, instead of as the major part of the solution. So, if the thesis contributes to a general ‘de-mythologisation’ of the EU, unveiling what Césaire (1955:84) considered the ‘fundamental European lie’, future avenues of research could depart from these conclusions.

In this sense, the EU could still assist the DRC economically by listening to the real needs of the community and providing financial assistance to the country, but substituting the role of donor with a role of engagement in true solidarity. This needs a profound rethink of the EU’s role, and a clear delinking from its quasi-colonial economic ties with the recipient countries.

The EU could indeed accompany the DRC to complete its transition from colonialism to genuine independence; but to do so, it has to detach by and taking position against foreign business enterprises involved in looting the country’s economy, from a grammar of coloniality and from a distorted vision of the history, embracing a real global perspective.

I believe that future research could engage in these considerations and begin to further unpack methods in how to subvert the colonial discourse underpinning EU peacebuilding. There are a number of possible studies that could be initiated with this approach in mind. Further researches could explore how to bring historical accountability into the EU peacebuilding discourse. This might be done in a way in which an ethic of reparations and of global justice is utilised in place of the current ethic of civilisation and bringing peace as a moral duty.

Indeed, the exposure of coloniality can be propedeutic for looking for substitutive paradigms of international relations, and to shift the paradigm from a racial discourse to a request of social justice. The unidirectional trajectories of EU peacebuilding could, therefore, be deviated to mutual learning between so-called 'North' and 'South', allowing another syntax to take over the obsolete paternalistic and racialised stereotypes that fuel international interventions. This could be done for instance by applying the feasibility of "less intervention" or of "autonomous recovery" - as concepts already proposed by Weinstein (2005) and rearticulated by Rutazibwa (2013) - to the study of the EU peacebuilding.

Finally, the entire framework of this thesis could be applied to analyse another case study, and potentially to create a comparative project that allows for a comparison between different geographic areas. One of the most interesting comparisons could be done by analysing and comparing EU discourses in peacebuilding in the Balkans, in the light of recent approaches that uses postcolonial theory to the Balkans (see Baker, 2017).

These and more avenues for future research may be inspired by this dissertation, and I hope that this thesis has planted useful seeds that will grow into further investigations and a rich academic conversation.

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Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Interview 1: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Senior Advisor.
Brussels, 10 April 2015.

Interview 2: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Geographic desk.
Brussels, 1 December 2015.

Interview 3: Interview with Officer from EEAS, working on the IcSP.
Brussels, 14 December 2015.

Interview 4: Interview with Officer from DEVCO.
Brussels. 12 October 2015.

Interview 5: Interview with Officer from EEAS.
Brussels, 14 December 2015

Interview 6: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Transitional Justice and Human
Rights Department. Brussels, 2 October 2015.

Interview 7: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Delegation in Kinshasa.
Brussels, 14 March 2016.

Interview 8: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Geographic desk.
Brussels, 1 December 2015.

Interview 9: Interview with Officer from EUMS, working on CSDP.
Brussels, 3 March 2016.

Interview 10: Interview with Officer from DEVCO, Central African Unit.
Brussels, 4 April 2016.

Interview 11: Interview with Officer from ECHO, Trust Fund.
Brussels, 2 May 2016.

- Interview 12: Interview with Officer from EEAS. Pan-African Affairs.
Brussels, 16 March 2016.
- Interview 13: Interview with Officer from DEVCO. Peace Facility Unit, Africa-EU Partnership. Brussels, 13 April 2016.
- Interview 14: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Geographic desk.
Brussels, 11 May 2016.
- Interview 15: Interview with Officer from EEAS and delegate to COAFR.
Brussels, 15 May 2016.
- Interview 16: Interview with Officer from EEAS, IcSP.
Brussels 16 June 2016.
- Interview 17: Interview with Deputy Head of the Central African Department. EEAS.
Brussels, 20 July 2016.
- Interview 18: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Geographic desk.
Brussels, 1 December 2015.
- Interview 19 – 20: Interview with two Officers from EUMS.
Brussels, 23 October 2015.
- Interview 21: Interview with Officer from EUMS. In charge of EUPOL Kinshasa.
Brussels, 21 March 2016.
- Interview 22: Interview with Officer from EUMS.
Brussels, 13 May 2016.
- Interview 23: Interview with Officer from EUMS. Working on EUSEC.
Brussels, 22 April 2016.
- Interview 24: Interview with Officer from EUMS, working on EUSEC.
Brussels, 10 December 2015.
- Interview 25: Interview with Action Officer in the Crisis Response Planning Division of the EEAS. Brussels, 23 March 2016.

Interview 26-28: Group interview with three EUMS.

Brussels, 2 July 2016.

Interview 29: Interview with Senior Advisor EU-Africa relations, EEAS.

Brussels, 3 May 2016.

Interview 30: Interview with EUMS, working on EUSEC.

Brussels, 13 April 2016.

Interview 31: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Geographic desk.

Brussels, 14 June 2016

Interview 32: Interview with Officer from EEAS.

Brussels, 3 May 2016

Interview 33: Interview with EUMS, working on EUSEC.

Brussels, 13 April 2016

Interview 34: Interview with EUMS. Crisis Response and Operation Coordination

Officer. Brussels, 13 April 2016

Interview 35: Interview with EUMS, working on EUSEC.

Brussels, 15 April 2016

Interview 36: Interview with EUMS, working on EUSEC.

Brussels, 30 May 2016

Interview 37-39: Joint interviews with three EUMS.

Brussels, 10 June 2016.

Interview 40: Interview with Officer from DEVCO. Geographic coordination.

Brussels, 4 May 2016.

Interview 41: Interview with Officer from EEAS.

Brussels, 16 June 2016.

Interview 42: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Transitional Justice and Human

Right Department. Brussels, 30 May 2016

Interview 43: Interview with Officer from EEAS, FPI.

Brussels, 3 May 2016.

Interview 44-45: Interview with two experts from EPLO, European Peacebuilding

Liaison Office. Brussels, 13 April 2015

Interview 46-47: Interview with two Officers from DPKO.

Brussels, 14 April 2016.

Interview 48: Interview with MEP in charge of coordinating the exhibition of the House

of European History. Brussels, 23 June 2016

Interview 49: Interview with a MEP collaborating to the conceptual draft for the

House of the European History. Brussels, 12 May 2016.

Interview 50: Interview with Officer from ECHO.

Brussels, 16 April 2016

Interview 51: Interview with Officer from EUMS. Integrated Strategic Planning.

Brussels, December 2015.

Interview 52: Interview with Officer from EEAS. Program manager at the EU

Delegation in Kinshasa. Brussels, 13 May 2016.

Interview 53: Interview with Officer from DEVCO.

Brussels, 10 March 2016.

Interview 54-56: Joint Interview with Three Officers from EEAS, Conflict

Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation. Brussels, 2 October 2015.

Interview 57: Interview with Officer from the World Bank. Post Conflict Needs

Assessment. Brussels, 14 April 2016.

Interview 58: Interview with Officer from OCHA, Liaison Office.

Brussels, 20 June 2016.

Interview 59: Interview with Officer from ECHO.

Brussels, 26 May 2016

Interview 60-61: Interview with two Officers from DEVCO. Geographical coordination. Brussels, 25 March 2016.

Interview 62: Interview with Officer from EEAS, Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation. Brussels, 27 April 2016.

The identity of my interviewees has been kept anonymous due to their willingness to not being identified. However, some of them agreed to disclose their job title. I gave to my interviewees an ‘informed consent’ that explained to all participants the purpose and aims of the research and guaranteed the protection of their data.